DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 348 237 SO 019 697

AUTHOR	Yellis, Ken, Ed.
TITLE	Interpreting Historic Sites & the Built Environment.
INSTITUTION	Museum Education Roundtable, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	85
NOTE	32p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Museum Education Roundtable, P.O. Box 506, Beltsville, MD 20705 ($5.).
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
JOURNAL CIT	Journal of Museum Education: Roundtable Reports; v10 n3 Sum 1985
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Architectural Education; Architecture; *Built Environment; *Educational Facilities; *Educational Improvement; *Educational Philosophy; Educational Quality; Educational Resources; Elementary Secondary Education; *History; Interior Space; Interpreters; Local History; *Museums; Orientation; Physical Environment
IDENTIFIERS	Historical Background; Historical Explanation; Historical Interpretation; Historical Landmarks; Historical Materials; Historical Methods; Historical Societies; *Historic Sites; Illinois (Chicago); Living History; Museum Studies

ABSTRACT

This issue focuses on the interpretation of built environments, from Washington Irving's 19th century home in Tarrytown, New York, to structures in contemporary Chicago. Barbara Carson, Margaret Piatt, and Renee Friedman discuss the interpretation of interior and exterior spaces and explain how to teach history with objects instead of teaching the history of objects. Suzanne Schell describes how the interpretation of historic sites has evolved since the first one was established in 1850. Richard Ehrlich, examining the functions and objectives of museum visitor orientation, states that orientation should prepare visitors for their experience by encouraging real learning. Candace Matelic explores the development of interpreter training at the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan. Robert Birney offers guidelines for achieving excellence in educating people to interpret historic sites to the public. Fred Schroeder states that, while living history is an exciting and entertaining method of historical interpretation, it must be augmented by traditional interpretive techniques, such as case exhibits and lectures, to accurately depict all aspects of life. Emily Eig and Laura Harris, describing Chicago as a museum, explore municipal and private efforts in presenting/interpreting its artifacts/buildings to the public. Alan Sandler stresses the importance of teaching about architecture, presenting excerpts from "The Sourcebook," a compendium of teaching resources developed by the American Institute of Architects to bring architecture into the classroom. John Herbst discusses the cooperative efforts of three museums near Paterson, New Jersey in sponsoring a joint exhibition focusing on local history. (GEA)

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INTERPRETING HISTORIC SITES & THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Ken Yellis, Editor

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The Journal of Museum Education
Volume 10, Number 3
Summer, 1985

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Editors' Notes

The remains of an ancient stone wall weave a path through 20th-century London. Rebuilt several times in the past 1,800 years, this venerable city wall today competes with subways, churches, and office buildings for the attention of busy passersby. The Museum of London devised a self-guided London Wall Walk to make residents aware of the wall and surrounding built environment. Twenty-one numbered ceramic panels lead walkers along a portion of the wall, pointing out the actual wall in some places, reconstructing the scene with period and modern drawings in other places, and, throughout, focusing the walker's attention on a significant piece of London's history in the context of London's present. (As a nice by-the-by, the walk concludes near the museum.)

The London Wall Walk is a good example of interpretation of the built environment. This issue of The Journal of Museum Education: Roundtable Reports *considers other good examples of interpretation of built environments, from Washington Irving's 19th-century home in Tarrytown, New York, to contemporary Chicago, Illinois.*

We bring to our readers' attention a handful of examples, as well as thoughtful pieces about the related aspects of staff training, living history versus nostalgia, interpreting material culture, and visitor orientation. Reviews of recent literature in the field and a thorough review of the evolution of interpretation at historic sites (olde bylt environments) round out our issue.

—Suzanne Schell
—Susan Nichols

THE JOURNAL OF MUSEUM EDUCATION: ROUNDTABLE REPORTS

The Journal of Museum Education: Roundtable Reports is published quarterly by the Museum Education Roundtable, Box 8561, Rockville, MD. The purpose of *The Journal* is to foster communication in the field of museum education. Using a thematic approach, *The Journal* presents the theory, research, and practice of museum education. The articles in this issue reflect the opinions of individual authors, and not necessarily those of the Board of Directors, or of the editorial committee.

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Editor-in-Chief: Ken Yellis; Managing Editor: Wendy Shay; Editorial Committee: Suzanne Herlitz Derby, John Falk, Susan Nichols, Ruth Ann O'Connell, Heather Paisley-Jones, Suzanne Schell, Marsha Semmel, Elizabeth Sharpe, Susan Silverstein, Annette Valeo and Mary Alexander, AAM Education Committee Representative.

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Readers interested in publishing in *The Journal of Museum Education: Roundtable Reports* may obtain a style sheet by writing The Editorial Committee, Museum Education Roundtable, Box 8561, Rockville, MD 20856. In addition, the editorial committee encourages responses to articles contained in *The Journal*.

The following three articles by Carson, Friedman and Piatt are based on their presentations made at the 1984 annual meeting of the American Association of Museums in a session entitled "Historic Site Interpretation: What Is It?" which focused on the content of interpretation. Friedman chaired the session.

Interpreting History Through Objects

by Barbara G. Carson

Tea tables, candlemolds, blanket chests, Terry clocks, and hand mills—these things speak for times past when they were made. Objects help us understand history. The displays and scene-settings of exhibitions and historic sites are built on that generally accepted but little understood premise. In trying to teach history with things, educational directors and their staff interpreters often end up teaching something else. Yet by paying attention to what history is and by following a few simple guidelines, they can come closer to their historical objective.

As a discipline, history concerns people, people from the past who behaved in various ways. History seeks to explain their thoughts and actions. In order to use objects in an historical context, we must first relate the objects to the men, women, and children who made, sold, bought, and used them. Second, we must relate the people and the objects to behavior patterns and then analyze the activities. The progression should move from things to people and their actions and then to an exploration of ideas about the behavior. From meat cleavers, bread peels, candlemolds, and a whole assortment of craft and domestic paraphernalia, we should try to envision butchers, bakers, candlestick-makers, their kith and kin, and all the others up and down the social order. And once we have identified the people, we should try to identify the activities the people engaged in with the objects. Finally, we should ask: why? What personal, economic, social, political, religious, and cultural assumptions motivated their actions?

This seems straightforward, and it can be. However, the fact is that most books, museum exhibitions, and historic sites that illustrate or display objects do not move from things to people, to activities, to ideas. They stop short of establishing these relationships; they fail to search for explanations. Let me take you to an unspecified but fashionable mid-eighteenth-century historic house where the guide might say:

This lovely bedroom is furnished in the Chippendale

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Interpreting Outside Spaces

by Renee Friedman

What is outside an historic house can tell us as much about the people who lived there and the culture they represent as what is inside. Take, for example, a log cabin in a clearing with fields put up in winter wheat and field crops, a kitchen garden near the house, and dirt paths that directly connect one area with the next. Or a Renaissance Revival townhouse close to the road with little outdoor space other than for stables. Or a Georgian country home with extensive gardens laid out in neoclassical style with paths and landscape in correct symmetry. Each is different; each reflects ideas about philosophy, work, technology, gender roles, lifestyle, taste, and community.

Often, the "interpretation" that takes place on the outside of historic sites is stylistic analysis ("This is a Gothic Revival cottage popular in the Victorian period"), great-man-related ("Mr. So-and-So liked to sit here in the evenings") or directional ("The root cellar is to your left"). The rich resource that trees, paths, buildings, brooks, spaces, and gardens provide as interpretive take-off points is neglected. Revealing connections that could be made are not made.

The objects of an outdoor tour—plants, bushes, trees, fences, barns, gates, and houses—are similar to teacups, tables, and paintings. They can be interpreted to make connections between the past and the present, between the object and the viewer, between things and ideas, between the object and people then and now. Objects in the built and natural environment can be analyzed by their design, their materials, whether they are natural or planned, and whether they are utilitarian, aesthetic or both. In other words, objects outside can be interpreted much like objects inside. *continued on page 5*

Interpreting Interior Spaces

by Margaret Piatt

What do you know about where you are? Before you read any further, stop and look around you. If you are in a room, consider how large it is. Are there windows? What building materials were used for the ceiling, floor, and walls? Do the structural elements have any decorative features? When was it built? Was it expensive to build? Who uses this room? Does it have periods of greater and lesser use? If you are able to answer these questions or have a clue to finding the answers, then you are on your way to interpreting an interior space.

Interpretation is the process of revealing connections among objects, places, people, and events. Effective interpreters use a variety of techniques to draw a museum visitor's attention to people, events, and ideas. If you doubt the power and meaning of an interior space, simply close your eyes and remember a room from your past. Imagine yourself standing by the door. What is the feeling of the room? What objects do you immediately recall? Move through the room. Pause by a specific object. Think about what it is. Who used it? What events or people do you associate with the object and the space as a whole?

If you are still wondering how to interpret an interior space, a wonderful parody might help. David Macaulay's *Motel of Mysteries* (Houghton Mifflin, 1979) describes an archaeologist, Howard Carson, who in the year A.D. 4022, discovers a previously buried entrance into what he assumes to be an ancient tomb. It is in fact the entrance to a motel room buried under impurities and junk mail in 1985. Carson interprets the room:

> Everything in the Outer Chamber [bedroom] faced the Great Altar [television], including the body of the deceased, which still lay on top of the Ceremonial Platform [bed]. In its hand was the Sacred Communicator [television's remote control] and around its wrist was a flexible golden band [watch] bearing an image similar to that of the upper altar. Signs of the ancient burial ritual were everywhere. A variety of garments, including the ceremonial chest plate [brassiere] and shoes designed to hold coins [penny loafers] were scattered about the chamber.

Macaulay continues to describe the interior space and to reveal connections among the objects, people, and events of a culture. Of course, we who live in that culture know that these interpretations are all incorrect. Nevertheless, Macaulay demonstrates how to interpret and the importance of maintaining a sense of humor.

Margaret Piatt is Assistant Director of Interpretation for training and staff development at Old Sturbridge Village. In June 1984, at the annual AAM meeting, she led her colleagues in a similar exercise to interpret the Idaho Room of the Washington Sheraton Hotel.

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style. The tea table was a new form of furniture at that time. The curving legs and the carved border around the circular top mark it as the height of fashion. A mechanism under the pie crust surface allows it to be turned up so the table could be placed against a wall when not in use. Isn't the hand-workmanship beautiful!

In seventy-two well-organized words visitors are introduced to a room full of objects which are identified by style, and the history of one item is selected for special mention. The history *of things* can be a useful first step in teaching *history with* artifacts, but these separate histories of dressing tables, looking glasses, and the fabrics that draped them fall short of, first, connecting the objects to people and activities and, second, looking for explanations for their behavior. Similarly, stories of technology which identify raw materials and the sequence of steps in production processes should not be confused with the discipline of history. They concentrate on the way things are made, not on the people who made them and the importance of production activity in their lives.

For most museums and historic houses the practical starting point has to be the structures and objects they have to display to visitors. In connecting people to the tangible survivals or to technological processes, I recommend that you ask a series of questions. They are based on the familiar ones: Who? What? When? Where? How? And why? But they are adapted to interpretive purposes.

First, what is this object?

Second, what activity was it part of? Was it used alone or as part of a larger functional system? Historical interpretations of objects become broader if you think systems rather than specific artifacts, and it is worth remembering that the original system may have included artifacts that have not survived. Think artificial illumination, not candles; think accounting and financial transactions or personal correspondence, not desks. One should begin with practical direct function and, if appropriate, move on to social and ideological aspects. A single candle may have lit the way to bed, seven created a "splendid" effect in Robert Carter's dining room in 1773.

Third, who made, owned, maintained, or used the object? To explore the wide range of subjects a single artifact can open up, interpreters need to be aware of all people associated with every phase of the artifact's existence, although to keep the length of a specific interpretation manageable not all can be presented to the public.

Fourth, how did the people work together to make the activities happen or to achieve the desired result? Of course, people don't always share the same goals. Sometimes conflict replaces cooperation. As a reminder of the breadth of an adult individual's experience, I often think of six categories of human behavior anthropologists sometimes use to organize their fieldwork—making a home, earning a living, rearing and training the young, using leisure time, engaging in community activities, practicing religion. Everything people do can be placed in one of those six groups.

Fifth, how have things and people's circumstances and relationships with one another changed from one period to the next?

Sixth, why? Or, as a consequence of what? The fifth and sixth questions address historians' interest in change over time; they help us explore why people and their actions differ from one decade or century to another.

A modern example may clarify the method. First, the object is a tin can containing 1 pound 5 ounces of cherry pie filling. Second, the obvious activities associated with it are cooking and eating. Cherries are made into pie, and as a dessert, pie does more than provide basic sustenance. It suggests the pleasure of leisurely dining with family or friends. It also has ideological significance for Americans, thanks to Parson Weems and his story of little George and the hatchet.

Third, who made, owned, or used the can of cherry pie filling? The list of people expands the range of activities associated with the object beyond cooking and eating—commercial growers, seasonal processors, metallurgists, miners, assembly-line makers of cans, color separation specialists and printers of labels, advertisers, food store stockholders, managers, and checkers, the home cook (the can is a domestic size), diners, garbagemen, and administrators of sanitary waste sites.

Fourth, how did the people work together to make the activities happen? Many were hired, some were fired, others organized for better wages, and a few were invited to dinner. The activities may lead to harmonious or competitive relationships.

Fifth, how have things and people's circumstances and relationships with one another changed from one period to the next? Two hundred years ago rural farmers grew cherry trees, picked the fruit, and marketed it locally for housewives or servants to bake into pies. Today commercial agriculture, heavy industry, long-range transportation, and modern marketing have combined to reduce the seasonality of menus and to make meal preparation easier. Furthermore, family relationships have changed; the home cook may be the father.

Sixth, why? Explanations are never simple. A full exploration of the significance of the can of cherry pie filling in modern society is certainly more complex than anyone of sound mind would introduce in a single museum interpretation. Although some answers are more plausible than others, and museum interpretations should offer suggestions, people should be encouraged to form their own opinions about an answer to the open-ended question, why?

This discussion of a can of cherry pie filling has shown how useful the six questions are in telling *history with things*, but it is far too long for a museum label or an historic site interpretation. I'd like to revise the earlier interpretation I offered for the tea table in the Chippendale bedroom. Based on the six questions, the content of

the seventy-seven word message centers on people and tries to indicate the role the tea table played in their lives. I would like to explain more, but since my visitors won't stand still, I only offer hints.

> A fashionable woman slept, dressed, and entertained in this bedroom. Her servants moved the chairs and the tea table away from the wall to a location near the fire in winter or near a breeze in summer. They adjusted the top to support the silver teapot, jug, sugar bowl, and spoons and the china cups and saucers they carried from the kitchen, so their mistress and her visitors could leisurely gossip and laugh over a warm drink.

With practice any interpreter can learn to develop a coherent historical theme by using these six questions to move from objects to people and their behavior and to encourage visitors to search for their own reasons why people of earlier times might have behaved as they did.

Barbara Carson teaches decorative arts and the interpretation of decorative arts in the Smithsonian Affiliated Programs at The George Washington University. She is co-author of both the essay, "Things Unspoken" in Ordinary People and Everyday Life *(American Association for State and Local History, 1983) and a National Park Service independent study course about historic site interpretation also published by AASLH.*

Credit: Illustration by A.T. Stephens

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Recently, we expanded the interpretation of Sunnyside, the home of Washington Irving in Tarrytown, New York, to include an outdoor segment. Previously, interpretation took place inside the house and emphasized mid-nineteenth-century lifestyles and Irving as writer, diplomat, and creator/resident of Sunnyside. While all visitors were encouraged to wander the grounds, very few did. On lovely spring and summer days, some might walk along the river path or go to the pond, but few explored the wonderful nooks—the glens, brook, hillcrest, or paths. Fewer still understood what they were seeing. The new tour combines the previous house visit with a landscape tour that emphasizes American romanticism, and makes connections between romanticism, Irving, and Sunnyside.

The interpretive plan takes a thematic approach. The following outline identifies these themes and describes how they are interpreted to visitors.

Theme 1. Romanticism:

Romanticism was an international movement. At Sunnyside, its influence can be seen in the combination of picturesque beauty and function. The Romantic way of seeing appeared in poetry, literature, painting, music, landscape, and architecture. In contrast to the formal control of neoclassicism, romanticism was personalized and seemingly spontaneous.

Examples of interpretation:

- Location: beginning of tour
  Walking in the mid-nineteenth century was regarded as a contemplative as well as a physical exercise encouraging an aesthetic appreciation of nature, a romantic outlook that differed from previous generations' attitudes towards nature. Tying this notion into visitors' walking will bring home this point.
- Location: pond
  Stylistic characteristics can be described by comparing the romantic "planned naturalness" of Sunnyside with the orderliness and symmetry of neoclassicism. This can be carried further into a discussion of the differences in general life philosophies between romanticism and neoclassicism.

Theme 2. Washington Irving:

Like his writing style, Washington Irving's work at Sunnyside has significance as an early example of American Romanticism.

Example of interpretation:

- Location: pond with swan surrounded with drooping trees
  Connections can be made to Irving's experiences in Europe and his friendship with Sir Walter Scott, his artistic style, and to romanticism in the Hudson River Valley through the Knickerbocker writers as well as to painters such as Frederick Church and Asher Durand.

Theme 3. The River:

The bond that defines this region is the Hudson River. The way people have used it has changed over time—transportation, power, aesthetics—but its presence dominates and controls the region.

Examples of interpretation:

- Location: viewing overall landscape
  In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, this land was agricultural; the river had practical value as a power source and for transportation. By the mid-nineteenth century, a new philosophy fostered by industrialization and urbanization emphasized aesthetics combined with practicality.
- Location: overlooking the house and the river
  When Irving settled here, industrialization had begun to bring vast changes in transportation (railroad and steam boat), the economy, and a shift from a farm economy to a "country retreat" lifestyle.

Theme 4. Everyday life:

In the mid-nineteenth century, some people settled in the Hudson River Valley because they wanted a country retreat near New York City; others came because work was here. Irish immigrants in particular became the labor force.

Examples of interpretation:

- Location: The kitchen yard
  Interpreting the use of outbuildings and farm structures to differentiate country and city living can lead to a discussion of the dependence of the middle class on an inexpensive labor force.
- Location: The kitchen yard
  For the first time, an emerging immigrant class provided people who remained in domestic work all their lives rather than working as "help" until they could buy land of their own, as was the case in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Renee Friedman is Director of Education and Interpretation for Sleepy Hollow Restorations, Tarrytown, New York, which administers Sunnyside and other historic properties. A videotape showing good and bad examples of interpreting exterior spaces has been developed as a training tool for interpreters at Sunnyside.

On Interpretation and Historic Sites

by Suzanne B. Schell

Historic sites are important cultural resources that preserve and recreate an historical context for the tangible remains of the past as evidenced in historical environments, architecture, and artifacts. Their potential for interpreting American history has evolved slowly.

Historical Perspective

Beyond preservation, which frequently was an end in itself, America's historic sites initially were saved for the didactic purposes of inspiring patriotism and inculcating civic virtues. Early preservationists established historic houses as shrines to the nation's Founding Fathers and marked battlefields and graves as monuments commemorating war heroes. Patriotic reasons led the New York State Legislature in 1850 to acquire the Hasbrouck House in Newburgh which had served as General Washington's headquarters.[1] This monument to the "Father of Our Country" and the American Revolution was the first historic site preserved and opened to the public. In 1859, Ann Pamela Cunningham and her fellow female philanthropists, the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, succeeded in their crusade to save Washington's home as a shrine where "mothers of the land and their innocent children might make their offering in the cause of greatness, goodness, and prosperity of the country."[2] Patriotism and filial pietism continued to be major motivating forces for preservation nearly seventy-five years later when the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation solicited funds from elementary school students to preserve Monticello as "a Patriotic Shrine for the Children of America."[3] Likewise, Colonial Williamsburg was founded in 1926 to tell the story of America's patriots. This nationalistic interest in America's heritage during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries coincided with a wave of immigrants who, according to some preservationists, needed to be Americanized.[4]

Besides association with historical figures and events, historic buildings were preserved by virtue of their antiquity. For example, the first or oldest structure in a town was saved by many local preservationist groups in New England. As appreciation of America's tangible heritage grew in the early twentieth century, aesthetic considerations became another justification for preserving historic buildings. The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, established in 1910 by William Sumner Appleton, saved historic houses for their architectural merit.[5] Similarly, the Pennsylvania Museum (now the Philadelphia Museum of Art), under the leadership of architect Fiske Kimball, restored historic houses in Fairmount Park "to illustrate the evolution of American art," representing "the very finest of their respective periods and types."[6] Thus, artistically outstanding examples, but not necessarily representative examples, of American architecture were preserved.

Gradually, a more strictly educational purpose emerged for historic sites. The Essex Institute in Salem, Massachusetts, was the first museum to install American period rooms. George Francis Dow furnished these three period

rooms (still intact) "to heighten the illusion of actual human occupancy" by casually arranging objects such as an 1800 Salem newspaper and a pair of spectacles.[7] Two years later, he moved the endangered John Ward House from its original site to a lot behind the museum where it could be preserved. It was furnished "to present a truthful picture of an interior of the year 1700" with original artifacts and, where necessary, reproductions to give "the atmosphere of livableness."[8] Other historic structures were added to the Essex Institute site, making it the first American outdoor museum where Dow sought to illustrate the everyday life of America's forefathers.[9] Following in this vein, Henry Ford, in 1929 at Dearborn, Michigan, dedicated Greenfield Village to reproduce "American life as lived."[10] Like present-day material culture historians, Ford believed that we can learn about the past from "the things people used." However, his was a nostalgic and idealistic view of the past—the good old days. Ford also celebrated the Common Man and modeled Greenfield Village after Skansen, Stockholm's open-air living folk museum, founded in 1891 by Arthur Hazelius.[11] Colonial Williamsburg and its patron, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., also pioneered the outdoor museum concept by attempting to recreate the historic environment of that eighteenth-century Virginia capital and to portray the lives and times of its political leaders.[12] Other open-air museums were established during the following decades, some of them beginning as generalized colonial or pioneer villages with historic buildings moved from original sites to an architectural park for preservation. The most noted of the early reconstructed villages include Lincoln's New Salem in Illinois, Conner Prairie Pioneer Settlement in Indiana, the Farmer's Museum in Cooperstown, and the Shelburne Museum in Vermont.[13]

Laurence Vail Coleman, in his book on *Historic House Museums* published by the American Association of Museums in 1933, documented that there were more than 400 such museums at the time, a number which had grown from a mere 20 historic houses open in 1895 and nearly 100 in 1910.[14] Coleman attributed this proliferation to increased leisure and the popularization of the automobile which made it possible for people to visit scattered historic sites. He observed that "people are asking that houses be explained, as well as saved" and provided insightful suggestions for "interpretation."[15] Guides had made their appearance as early as 1876 at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia where costumed ladies conducted visitors through the reconstructed New England Farmer's Home.[16] At Mount Vernon, the resident director showed visitors around the mansion and grounds or the guard at Washington's tomb talked to tourists; a visitor handbook was published in the early 1870s.[17] Later at the Essex Institute, women dressed in homespun costumes of the period acted as custodians, showing the John Ward House to visitors.[18] At Colonial Williamsburg, William Goodwin advocated "interpretation" to inform visitors "about the people who lived in Williamsburg," and in 1932 the first costumed hostesses greeted visitors to Raleigh Tavern.[19] These hostesses and tour guides were the forerunners of today's historic site interpreters.

Historic Sites Today

Of the estimated 5,500 museums in the United States surveyed in 1978 for the Institute of Museum Services, half were history museums and, among these, historic sites were the most common.[20] Historic sites include domestic structures (city dwellings and farms of both prominent individuals and common people); communities (neighborhoods, villages/towns, utopian settlements); industrial and commercial sites (factories, mills, trading posts, taverns, general stores); transportation sites (trails, canals, railroad depots, ships); military and governmental sites (battlefields and forts, courthouses and town/city halls); educational and religious structures (schools and churches); monuments and cemeteries; prehistoric and Native American sites; historic landscapes and environments. Historic site museums encompass historic houses, living history farms, architectural parks, restored villages, folk parks, and open-air museums. William Alderson and Shirley Payne Low distinguish three categories of historic sites paralleling the historical evolution of these museums: 1) the documentary site associated with an historical event or person; 2) the representative site depicting a period of history or a way of life; and 3) the aesthetic site displaying exceptional examples of furnishings in period rooms.[21] Despite their diversity, these historic sites share a number of unique characteristics related to environment, collections, and interpretive methods.

Philosophical Perspective

Historic sites exhibit artifacts arranged in the context of a preserved or recreated environment to communicate something significant about the past. An historic structure and its furnishings must be considered an integral part of the whole site, including its surroundings. The Historic Sites Committee of the American Association of Museums Accreditation Commission recognized this unique synergetic character of historic site collections when it observed that the historic structure is an artifact itself and "functions as the prominent feature of the collection."[22] An historic site consists not only of its structures but encompasses its total environment, including gardens, fences, and roads. The landscape, whether rural or urban, reflects the historical relationship between people and land. Together these elements form a macro-artifact.[23] Objects in an historic site collection do not necessarily have intrinsic value but may be utilitarian in nature without special aesthetic merit. The historical significance of these artifacts is in their arrangement and relationship to one another.[24] Frequently, historic sites have living collections—plants and animals; sometimes the latter eat the former as is the case when livestock consume crops. Because historic sites and their collections must be con-

sidered in their context of a total environment, interpretation becomes paramount.

The National Endowment for the Humanities, some years ago, defined interpretation as "the bridge between the object and the observer."[25] The role of the interpreter is to create a dialogue between artifact and visitor. The AAM Committee defined the word more specifically for historic sites:

> Interpretation is a planned effort, to create for the visitor an understanding of the history and significance of events, people and objects with which the site is associated.[26]

The unique nature of historic sites has made passive interpretive methods, such as exhibit labels and what I call "this is" tours, largely ineffective except as a supplement to a more active mode of interpretation. Functional interpretation of how and why objects and structures were used is much more meaningful to the public. At historic sites, usually an interpreter is the key to explaining the past and relating it to the life experiences of visitors.[27] For this reason, historic sites have pioneered innovative educational methods such as living history and first-person interpretation where an interpreter (or an actor) role plays an historical character dressed in period clothing. Less dramatic, but perhaps more realistic, are interpretive programs and craft/process demonstrations conducted in third person by an interpreter also dressed in period clothing. Some sites invite visitors to participate in live-in programs where they perform historical activities themselves. At the very least, historic site museums with limited resources rely on tour guides to interpret the site, giving visitors a personalized experience. Through the inductive educational method of inquiry, traditional tours can be enlivened for visitors by encouraging them to "read" objects, structures and the environment. Freeman Tilden's "Six Principles of Interpretation," progressive when they were first published for the National Park Service in 1957, still constitute useful guidelines for interpreters.[28]

But interpretation at an historic site does not begin for the visitors when the guide greets them, nor even when they read a brochure or see an audiovisual orientation program. There is the phenomenon of non-verbal interpretation derived from sensory perceptions initially experienced by visitors. Even before they set foot on the site, visitors form a mental image of the past. Through the unique contextual environment and its sensory experience—what Edward Alexander calls the "fourth dimension"—historic sites can mentally transport people back in time.[29] It is this feature that makes historic sites powerful educational tools for interpreting history. Accuracy of detail in restoration and furnishing, therefore, is essential if this visual image of the past is to be correct. Since no sites appear today exactly as they did in the past, modern intrusions and anachronisms must be dealt with interpretively so that visitors understand what they see. Changes in scale, land use, and landscape should be explained. For example, many historical farms are only scale models used for demonstration purposes compared to the original working farms.[30] It is equally important not to impose twentieth century values, standards, or aesthetics on the past. An historic house, for example, should reflect the taste and housekeeping practices of its own time period, not ours.[31]

Many historic sites and open-air museums are ideally suited for interpreting the social history of ordinary people and their everyday life. During the last decade, research findings of social historians have provided new insight for interpretive programs. By using demographic data to reconstruct history from "the bottom up," museum educators have generated profiles of average people.[32] When combined with research about folk traditions, this becomes the basis for interpreting daily life experiences of common folk—family, foodways, shelter, clothing, rites of passage, education, work, community, and values. In order to treat a culture as a whole and avoid a false, nostalgic view of the past, negative as well as positive aspects must be interpreted, such as disease, death, poverty, crime, and conflict.[33] To transcend merely descriptive "pots-and-pans" history or "show-and-tell" demonstrations, artifacts and mundane activities must be interpreted in the broader context of social, political, economic, religious, and cultural phenomena. It is necessary to explain *why* these activities were done and *why* events occurred in the past. At living history museums, experimental archaeological techniques are used to simulate historical processes such as farming methods, food preparation, and building construction techniques. These recreated historical processes are as vital as the collections.[34] Some historic sites interpret a specific time and place. A more difficult goal, particularly for time-capsule restorations, is the explanation of the dynamic forces—continuity and change—which transformed communities over time.[35]

Through an interdisciplinary approach to material culture, historic sites interpret the social, political, economic, religious, and cultural influences, trends, and events in American history. For example, historic houses can serve as "learning laboratories" for cultural anthropology, folklife studies, social psychology, cultural geography, art and architectural history, literature, environmental studies, and the sciences.[36] Techniques of archaeological inquiry have been successfully applied above-ground to "read" historic sites and the built environment of the cityscape.[37] A holistic approach to history is achieved by relating material culture to ideas.[38]

Research is the key to creating a credible interpretive program. Information about material culture and lifestyle must be based on thorough research. At living historical farms, agricultural research is necessary to backbreed plants and animals authentic to the period represented.[39] If historic sites are to avoid an inaccurate homogenous view of American history, this research must entail a study

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of regional, economic, ethnic, and racial differences.[40] Finally, it is necessary to admit that our knowledge of the past is limited and based on incomplete records.[41] Historic sites only represent our current interpretation of the past, subject to revision by future historians. Truth in interpretation is essential; anything less is to mislead the public.

Practical Considerations

Key words in the AAM Committee definition of interpretation are "planned effort." The AAM's "Supplemental Accreditation Questionnaire For Historic Sites" goes on to establish that a written interpretive plan is a professional standard.[42] Initially, this is a conceptual document which derives from the museum's mission, inventories the site's cultural resources, and defines interpretive objectives. Based on this foundation, it develops the site's storyline by identifying specific themes to be interpreted. Then the plan outlines how the interpretive message will be conveyed to the public by determining the type of programs to be offered. This requires decisions about interpretive methods to be used, ranging from passive self-guiding materials to interactive living history. The nature of the interpretive strategies selected may necessitate policies regarding the costuming of interpreters, the inclusion of living collections, and the use of reproduction artifacts. For example, reproduction period clothing must be accurate in all details, including accessories. To be appropriate to the historical period being interpreted, plants and animals at the site usually must be backbred varieties. Replicas should be used in place of original artifacts for hands-on education programs or demonstrations to avoid deterioration or destruction. This planning process should include audience research for the prospective programs. The second half of the interpretive plan must deal with the reality of implementation by identifying the resources needed: finances, personnel, facilities, and equipment. The economics of personal interpretation dictate that methods using tour guides or interpreters are costly because they are labor intensive, compared to passive alternatives. Provisions must be made in the plan for developing a formal program to recruit and train interpretive staff or volunteers. Visitor orientation must be addressed in the plan, indicating whether written materials, audiovisual programs, or interpretive exhibits will be employed to provide visitors with historical background, orient them to the layout of the site and the pattern of circulation, and prepare them for the method of interpretation they will experience. The mode of interpretive program selected will have implications for all aspects of historic site operation, including security, care of collections, visitor services, maintenance, and site development, which must be taken into consideration. Lastly, the plan must establish a mechanism for periodic, formal evaluation.

In the 135 years since the first historic house was opened to the public in the United States, historic site museums have evolved from patriotic shrines to centers for learning about American history with standards established by the museum profession to guide their operation. These recent efforts to self-monitor and set professional standards are only the latest steps in an intriguing and complicated institutional history. If, as we are advised in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, the past is prologue, then we can anticipate more changes in historic site interpretation as the profession matures.

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Functions and Objectives of Visitor Orientation: Fools Rush In

by Richard L. Ehrlich

In spite of the fact that all museum personnel must, as part of their professional rites of passage, be able to roll words like "orientation," "education," and "interpretation" knowingly off the tips of their tongues, these terms remain today little more than ill-defined professional buzzwords. This is the case because even though, as the saying goes, "Everybody's doin' it," what they are doing has not nearly as often as it should be been the product of thoughtful and rigorous intellectual analysis. What exactly should a museum's objective be in the realm of education? How and what does one teach in the context of a museum? These and many other questions relating directly to the museum's role as a teaching institution have all too often been given short shrift as we rushed ahead helter skelter to reach out to new and larger constituencies. While I would not for a moment question this commitment to making museums a more vital and meaningful part of the cultural lives of all citizens, I believe equally strongly that simply embracing this objective does not in fact absolve us from the responsibility to develop solid intellectual underpinnings for the endeavor.

Which brings me to the topic at hand—orientation. The mere fact that this word has, over the last decade or so, secured a firm niche in the lexicon of museums bespeaks a fundamental shift that has taken place in the role of these institutions in our culture.[1] Until well into the twentieth century, most museums in the United States were cloistered and elitist preserves in which the "If you have to ask, you don't belong here!" mentality held sway. Museums were (and to a degree still are) the exclusive domain of the rich and powerful collectors and blue-blooded curators who both, more often than not, regarded the museum's responsibilities to the outside world as having been fully discharged by the mere fact of

having "important" objects on display in a protected environment. Not surprisingly, public education was a concept as out of place in this vision of the proper role of museums as were the occasional school groups which persistent teachers managed to inveigle into the galleries of America's most prominent and well-endowed museums. As a consequence, the notion that museums had a responsibility to provide orientation programs to hushed and hallowed walls was not only viewed as irrelevant to the legitimate purposes for which these organizations existed but perhaps even subversive to them.

During the 1960s and '70s, for a whole variety of reasons including the expansion in America of leisure time, the corrosive influence of inflation on museum finances, the graying of the nation's population and the popularization of the notion that learning is a lifelong pursuit, impetus was given to a redefinition of the role of museums in this society. Millions of Americans in search of self-fulfillment laid the groundwork for the emergence of the continuing education phenomenon on the nation's college campuses and applied pressure on museums to transform themselves into places where people of all ages and backgrounds could learn. The inexorable upward spiral of operating costs added further impetus to the amelioration of the genteel aura of the men's club, which for so long had pervaded museums. This made broadening of the base of support for museums not only politically astute, but in many instances a necessity born of the need to survive.

It was in this environment, one in which school children were more and more often seen in museum galleries and large numbers of people from what euphemistically was referred to as "the community" were not only allowed to cross museum thresholds but were actively encouraged to do so, that the concept of orientation became *au courant*. Today, in response to the query, "Does your museum offer visitors an orientation experience?", the majority of American museum personnel would likely answer in the affirmative. Also, while there would no doubt be a good deal of diversity in terms of preferred format (lecture, film, slides, etc.), the appropriateness of providing visitors something called an orientation would be readily acknowledged. In other words, the conclusion that, at least at the level of broad generalization, a consensus exists on "orientation" among museum practitioners seems irrefutable. On the other hand, we believe equally strongly that if one delved further into the heart of how museums teach and, more specifically, the role of orientation in accomplishing the educational objectives of museums, blank stares and vague pronouncements would be more the norm than the exception.

To be sure, this conclusion is not based on a scientific and comprehensive analysis of the topic, but, by virtue of broad exposure to what purports to be the state of the art, I nevertheless feel very comfortable making this assertion. Indeed, the vast majority of the efforts that have been observed to orient visitors are, from the standpoint of medium as well as message, not markedly different from the oppressively dull and vacuous harangues that are delivered at the front door of hundreds of historic house museums across the United States.

Picture, if you will, a wary, foot-shuffling audience trapped in the entry hall of the venerable Jewel House. The only means of escape is blocked by a grim-faced docent who, with all the feeling and expression of a robot, is delivering the orientation lecture. That she has done this at least a million times before is abundantly and painfully evident to everyone else in the room.

> The Jewel House, she intones, was built by the Honorable Endicott Peabody Lowell in 1762. He lived in the house until his death in 1810. The house was then sold to Josiah Abbott Cabot who ran a public house here until 1842 when he fell into the well after, some say, sampling too many of his own wares. The house was inherited by his sister Mrs. Flora DePot, and served as a stop on the underground railroad system. The chairs in the parlor are Chippendale and the candlesticks are Paul Revere. George Washington slept here on September 1, 1762. Rest rooms are in the basement. Are there any questions?

The "orientation" now completed, the guide relinquishes her post barring the exit and the visitors, showing obvious signs of relief, quickly move on.

Stultifyingly boring and of dubious relevance to anyone but devotees of trivia games, the general approach to orientation caricatured above is today by far more the norm than the exception. Rather than reinforcing the credentials of museums as places where tangible expressions of social, cultural, and aesthetic lives of human beings can be studied, this approach to orientation sets the stage for museum visits in which objects are viewed primarily as curiosities and manifestations of contemporary wealth. Far preferable in our view are programs which draw attention to the fact that objects, whether utilitarian or purely decorative, are documents that can be made to reveal much about the human spirit and the nature of human society which spawned them.

Orientation programs which take cognizance of this perception of the museum's educational mission transcend the level of trivia to create cognitive bridges or links between the visitor and the subject matter represented by the museum's collection(s). That is to say, visitors who are exposed to introductory programs designed specifically with this function in mind are stimulated to sort through their own data banks (i.e., memories) in order to frame the museum experience within the body of knowledge, experience, and predispositions they already possess. By helping to place the museum's offerings within a comprehensible framework or structure, orientation programs facilitate the integration into memory of new data and concepts or, in other words, make learning far more likely to occur.

On the other hand, this process, which may also be

referred to as "reference cueing," does not presuppose extensive formal educational preparation and/or detailed knowledge on the part of visitors of the subject matter to be presented. Rather, visitors can at widely varying levels of sophistication and comprehension draw upon whatever knowledge (and indeed misinformation and prejudice) they already possess to set the stage for the assimilation of new material. For example, an orientation discussion on Shaker furniture would interpret the religious sect in the context of the social and cultural upheavals associated with the Industrial Revolution. Thus, specialized information about the furniture would be related to a broader body of ideas familiar to most visitors. The result is an enhancement of the visitors' ability to cross reference and "interfile" data, and hence the enlargement of both the educational scope and impact of the museum visit.

To properly discharge this function an orientation program first and foremost must place the subjects to be treated within chronological and/or topical frames of reference most likely to be meaningful to the audiences being addressed. In the case of a Georgia cotton plantation, for example, important time and topical cues abound. Such references as "antebellum," "first half of the nineteenth century," and "after the Revolutionary War" serve the purpose of placing the site within a chronology of events that will prove to be evocative to most visitors. Similarly, the introduction of key socioeconomic concepts and references will assist visitors in sifting through the body of relevant beliefs, information, and experience stored in their memories in order to create a suitable mental template or framework for assimilating additional knowledge. Thus references to words and phrases such as "slavery," "King Cotton," "subjugation," and "master" create in the mind's eye of visitors a suitable backdrop for subsequent exposure to the specific features and background of the site in question.

Another extremely important function of the orientation experience is the creation for visitors of a reference vocabulary of ideas, concepts, facts, and hypotheses which constitute what is frequently simply referred to as an "overview" of a subject. In virtually all museum settings the sophistication and comprehensiveness of this analysis must take into consideration the fact that visitors bring to orientation widely divergent backgrounds and levels of intellectual commitment and capacity. Even so, given even a modicum of intelligence and attentiveness, visitors inevitably leave the preparatory program with insights and information which subsequently provide points of entry to subjects which in all likelihood would otherwise prove to be both intimidating as well as impenetrable. Instead, armed with what we have termed a basic reference vocabulary, visitors are sensitized to the subjects dealt with in the galleries or out on the site, and so are made more receptive to learning.

This is, however, not to say that in most instances visitors will retain more than a small portion of the information which is presented as part of an orientation program. Nevertheless, that which is subject to recall will, as diffuse and inchoate as it may be, enable visitors to build understanding from a base of (one hopes) reliable and relevant information. Although an introductory component is seen as a necessary part of many other types of educational strategies and environments, in the context of the museum where learning is largely self-directed and self-initiated and at the same time relatively unstructured, the impact of an orientation as a learning catalyst is correspondingly greater.

Notable benefits also derive from orientation programs' abilities to create for visitors what may for the sake of categorization be termed a "subliminal agenda" for the encounter which follows with the museum's programs and resources. Consisting of questions raised or to be raised, special interests to be pursued, and information to be reaffirmed or in some instances merely displayed, this agenda is, among other things, a confidence-building device which for millions of visitors lessens the feelings of intimidation, awe, and mystery associated with museums. Consider if you will the hundreds of thousands of individuals who each year visit Plimoth Plantation.

Plimoth Plantation has long been a leader among open-air museums in the development of interpretive programs which take cognizance of the elemental, but nevertheless exceedingly important, principle that education endeavors, in order to be effective, must be active as opposed to passive pursuits. In this regard, we have found that the multi-image slide show which all visitors to the Pilgrim Village site are strongly encouraged to see has played a pivotal role in coaxing visitors out of the semi-somnolent state that for many had mysteriously appeared after arrival. Having experienced the audiovisual presentation visitors were far more comfortable in engaging our costumed staff in a dialogue then had been the case prior to offering this program. This in turn facilitates opening lines of communication to topics that are important in and of themselves or serve as springboards to the pivotal issues and ideas our interpretive efforts seek to illuminate.

Without orientation, the interplay between visitor and interpreter, which rests at the heart of the teaching process in an outdoor museum setting, was severely inhibited. Fear of embarrassment as well as the absence of a common ground upon which to communicate often made encounters between so-called Pilgrims and the public more painful than they were enlightening. The risk of appearing foolish spawned a "Let Fred do it" reticence to venture into unfamiliar territory. On the other hand, since the introduction of virtually universal orientation at our site, we have seen a vast increase in the number of visitors who adopt an aggressive participatory role in the learning process we seek to foster. Once this active mode is established, skilled interpreters may build upon the most seemingly mundane topics which catch visitors' fancy. On the other hand, absent this predisposition to participate and the result is that look of glassy-eyed boredom that is

by no means unfamiliar to museum people who have "meet the public" responsibilities.

Far from being unique to our site, we believe that the agenda-building capabilities of orientation programs will pertain in most, if not all applications, with a similarly positive impact. Whether visitors are being prepared to walk the galleries or tour an open-air museum, giving them clues, cues, and a sense of curiosity will heighten the chance that they will actively engage the museum in what can most aptly be described as a dialogue. From a pedagogical standpoint, there can be no doubt of the superior results when the museum sheds its mantle of mystery and elicits questions as opposed to reverential awe. An orientation program is frequently one of the most effective tools available to accomplish this objective.

Lastly, I would like to draw attention to the power (for good and bad) of an orientation presentation to shape the museum experience. Intended or not, an introductory program will inevitably have behavior-modeling side effects. This phenomenon derives from the fact that a high degree of responsiveness is to be expected to messages that bear the imprimatur of a respected institution. Reinforcing this receptivity is the power derived from the immediacy of the message. Information processed most recently in many instances has a stronger hold on human consciousness than that dealt with at some greater distance in time. And finally, since in many cases the information in the introductory program represents the sum total of the visitors' exposure to the subjects dealt with, the visitors are particularly susceptible to the power of suggestion.

In practical terms what this means is that while the orientation program can effectively facilitate learning, it can also effectively shape that experience. For example, the information, issues, and comparisons raised during orientation are likely to be those visitors dwell on during their encounters with the museum's collections. Subjects that are not raised or are dealt with in passing, although perhaps of notable significance, will not receive the attention that might otherwise accrue to them. Similarly, topics that seem to the museum staff to be given attention commensurate to their importance may find an unanticipated enthusiastic response. In this regard topics which touch upon matters relating to conflict and military affairs come immediately to mind. These subjects almost always evoke a level of interest and curiosity disproportionate to their significance within the scope of the subjects being treated, or, for that matter, the emphasis they are given in the orientation.

Returning now to the most basic of the premises which underlie this essay, the roles which have been articulated for orientation programs are all predicated on the conviction that museums can and should function as educational institutions rather than simply as keepers of treasures. To be sure, this notion, while on the ascendancy, has not yet swept before it all vestiges of "This is a ____, and that is a ____" school of interpretation, ancestor worship, village greens carefully manicured by squads of groundskeepers, and outdoor industrial museums that put many botanical gardens to shame. However, museums all over the United States have, albeit in some instances reluctantly and disingenuously, embraced the notion that a mission statement that does not feature broad-based educational objectives is a slender reed upon which to build success in the decades to come.

In my estimation, recognition of the responsibility to properly orient visitors is inherent within the acceptance by museums of a major role in the realm of public education. Simply put, the preparatory, introductory or, as I have been terming it, the "orientation" experience enhances the museum's capabilities as an instrument of teaching by performing the role of catalyst. Whether it is by triggering what we have called "reference cueing," creating a working vocabulary for the visit, or developing what was referred to as a "subliminal agenda" which provides structure for the events to come, the orientation experience facilitates communication and thereby the retention of ideas, information, and concepts. Regardless of the format chosen for orienting visitors, these objectives should guide those who wish to make museum collections more accessible to today's museum-goers.

[1] I wish to thank my colleague Candace Lee Heald for pointing me in the right direction in this section.

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Method, Concept, and Professional Exchange

by Candace T. Matelic

At many North American museums in the last few years, interpreter training has been the focus of much evaluation, rethinking, and new energy. We have long since come out of the dark ages, when guides and docents were handed a mountain of written material, told to learn it (memorize it if necessary), and be ready to meet the public when they reappeared. These "walking encyclopedias," who spieled off facts and facts and facts to unsuspecting and unprepared visitors, while always being gracious yet firmly in control, are being replaced by a new breed of interpreters. Training is no longer the icing on the cake, the last item to be added to budget if there is anything left over. Rather, it is recognized as a mandatory integral part of developing a successful interpretive program. We've begun to implement a long-held conviction: interpretive training must include method as well as message. Content alone is not enough. Interpreters must also learn *how* to communicate their interpretive message and information to our wide variety of twentieth-century audiences. We've also learned that ideas and concepts, not facts, provoke thought and inspiration in museum visitors. Thus, interpretive information and training should be conceptual in approach and focus. Finally, interpreters, discovering that they have much to share and learn from each other, have begun a series of large scale and very fruitful professional exchanges. This article will explore the development of interpreter training at the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan, over the last few years and the recent series of interpreter seminars co-sponsored by the Midwest Open-Air Museums Coordinating Council (MOMCC) and the Association for Living Historical Farms and Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM).

At the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village, the interpretive training process was totally revamped following an intensive self-study completed in 1981. This curriculum report identified collection strengths and proposed an overall interpretive focus for the museum. It also outlined several interpretive themes or subject areas through which the museum could communicate this interpretive message. This is where the interpretive training division of the education department came into the picture. To incorporate the new interpretive ideas into the daily interpretive program, we had to redo all written information. This seemed like a formidable task, considering our size (the village has over 100 historic structures and the museum houses twelve acres of collections) and the size of our interpretive manual (300 pages of undocumented facts and trivia).

First we organized a system for interpretive information consisting of separate manuals for introductory training, research, and on-site use by both staff and visitors. For the actual rewriting and compiling of information, we worked very closely with collections, library and archives, photographic and other education department staff. The manuals contained different types of information and were designed for specific functions which corresponded to the sequence of interpretive training. For instance, the introductory manuals contained primarily conceptual and overview information, briefly summarizing basic facts, but concentrating on interpretive significance and relationship to other collections and exhibits. The first and only place that an interpreter would find curatorial information was in the on-site manuals, located in the buildings or exhibits along with the artifacts. Likewise, research manuals were placed in the interpreter's library to be checked out once an interpreter felt ready to tackle this additional information.

After four years, six revisions of the introductory manual, and two years of work with on-site and research manuals, we were convinced that the system was flexible and worked. More important, we realized that we had to be translators of historical information for the facts to be usable for interpretation. If the program was to be of high quality, then a conscious, planned effort and an aggressive, responsive training program were necessary.

The training program was based on the following premises:

- Interpretive training includes clarifying interpretive storyline and significance; organizing and setting priorities for research information; preparing written materials; conducting classroom and on-site sessions; and following through with performance appraisals.
- Interpretive training should be conceptual in approach and focus.
- What occurs on-site between interpretive staff and museum visitors is directly related to what occurs during interpretive training.
- Learning is cumulative and, so too, interpretive training must occur in stages and be ongoing.
- Interpretation is a communication process between museum and visitor, and, when human staff are the communicators, interpretive training must include presentation skills as well as interpretive content.

For a new interpreter at the Henry Ford Museum and

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Educating for Excellence

by Robert C. Birney
with introduction by William Tramposch

Each year the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation invests approximately $500,000 in the educational programs for its interpretive staff, a staff which numbers about 550 members in the busy season. Presently, a department of twelve members oversees the development of these educational programs.

When interpreters are hired at Colonial Williamsburg, they participate in a preliminary interpretive education program which introduces them to the role of the interpreter at Colonial Williamsburg, the significance of our historical site, and the mission of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Once finished with this program, interpreters become involved in incremental training programs within the various departments in which they will interpret (crafts, performers, house interpreters, and escorted tours). Only after completing these programs does one put on a period costume and interpret to the public.

Veteran interpreters participate annually in an in-service training program, the "Core Curriculum." This sequential program consists of required courses, and leads to elective courses very much like the elective options offered in a higher education curriculum. Presently, plans are underway for advanced tutorial sessions for our more senior interpreters, as well as independent study options for those who have a strong desire to pursue individual research topics.

When asked to write an article about the interpretive training philosophy at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, I thought immediately of a stimulating piece that Robert C. Birney had written for our interpretive newsletter of March 1984. Bob's thoughts were directed to the interpretive staff, but his message bears relevance to all historic site interpreters.

It is my purpose to offer guidelines for achieving excellence in the task of educating people to interpret historic sites to the public. A recent analysis of the service profile of Colonial Williamsburg Foundation interpreters shows a sizable proportion has been with us for three to four years, an even larger proportion has been with us for more than ten years, and the remainder occupying the four-to-ten-year middle range. Our interpreters mirror our adult visitors for age, sex, education, and experience with Colonial Williamsburg. Therefore, Colonial Williamsburg interpreters are a most unusual student body and their efforts to learn more to tell the public are unending. There is nothing as tiresome and boring for the interpreter and the visitor as an aging interpretation from yesteryear. Education for excellent interpretation requires constancy, attention, and, above all, enjoyment.

Education embraces a number of terms. I wish to consider just two of them—training and study. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* is obviously puzzled by the word "training." I quote: "I. the act, process, or method of one who trains; II. state of being trained." No help there. Let me try to extract meaning for the word "training" from its uses. Children are trained. Novices seek training programs. The military gives training. And as Webster observes, you can be in training in athletics.

I would submit that training is a useful word because it points to a certain kind of educational situation. I think the key lies in the fact that we have trainers and trainees. Oddly enough, not many of the trainers are so identified. Those who train animals and athletes are called trainers. Most of the true trainers in our society are called something else—coaches, masters, supervisors, and occasionally teachers. (However, I shall not address teachers as trainers.) Instead I wish to come back to the fact that most trainers have trainees.

Trainees are usually thought of as novices. A novice is somebody who wants to learn, knows a negligible amount of what is to be learned, and is willing to be trained. The largest training establishment in the world has probably always been the military. The military practically monopolizes the word "training" because everyone understands that someone who joins the military will be trained. If we look at the military training situation, immediately we sense the central relationship between the trainer and the trainee. The trainee, willingly or unwillingly, volunteer or draftee, understands that the situation requires above all obedience, attention, and a high level of motivation to attempt the performance sought by the trainer. Trainers seem to face two kinds of situations. One is a selective situation in which it is understood that many are called but few will meet the standards of training. Piloting aircraft, operating sophisticated equipment, practicing certain types of medical work—these are understood to be sufficiently demanding and important so that a very high level of minimum performance is set. Large numbers of people are processed through the training program in order to get a *few* people who can do the job.

Let's consider what characterizes the desired performance. I am struck by what I call the convergent character of the performance. For many of the tasks I have been describing there is one right way, or at best a very few right ways, to perform the task. Indeed there is not much latitude for variation in performance if the task is to operate an exotic piece of machinery, execute the mechanics of a particular performance, meet certain treatment requirements in a medical situation, and so forth.

There is another side to training. Sometimes trainers are not told that their task is to produce an elite corps who

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Greenfield Village, introductory training consists of three phases. The first phase is an introductory course held primarily in the classroom covering background of the museum, basic facts, interpretive significance, and an introductory workshop on communication skills. The second phase occurs primarily on-site with curators and lead interpreters teaching more detailed sessions on background and process information, interpretative technique, and working with visitors. (This is necessary because the interpretive approach changes from building to building and covers the entire spectrum from tours and uniformed staff in stations to process demonstrations and first-person role playing.) Phase three covers all the specific process skills that staff need to interpret areas such as mills, farm, trades, domestic sites, role playing, or hands-on programs. This entire process, which usually takes about three months, is completed before staff meet the public.

Following introductory training, interpreters become "students" as described in Bob Birney's thought-provoking talk on Colonial Williamsburg's educational programs which appears elsewhere in this issue. They attend a continuous round of sessions and workshops offered throughout the year which highlight new research, seasonal changes in programs, and new installations. Staff do much of their own research in preparing characters for role playing interpretation. They regularly consult the interpreters and research libraries for additional information and often submit questions for curatorial input when they cannot find the answers. Interpretive content is continually revised for staff both through sessions and for written information.

To balance content and to build on the introductory communication skills workshop, interpreters also attend an interpretive methods program which focuses on technique, particularly presentation skills. This methods program includes sessions on speech physiology, care of the vocal system, effective use of language, and body movement and gesture. These sessions are followed up with individual observation throughout the year. A special component of the first interpretive methods course was a dynamic participatory workshop taught by a team of actors/teachers, the California-based Free Association Theatre. The workshop, "Applied Theatre Techniques," covered physical and vocal warm-up, vocal inflection, working with the senses, making transitions, using open-ended questions, and working effectively with large groups of people. Our 200 interpreters were totally energized by these sessions and continue to refer back to them for presentation techniques and ideas. Now in initial planning stages are method sessions for working with children, senior citizens, and handicapped visitors. Too, plans are underway to videotape individual interpreters interacting with the public as an evaluative tool for presentation skills. This type of interpreter training, which focuses on method rather than message, is crucial to support effective interpretation with today's audience. Interpreters must help visitors develop a visual and sensory literacy to fully enjoy and understand the rich teaching resources that are museums.

Increasingly, interpreters are better understanding their role within museums and developing a professional awareness and sophistication. Many museums have lead interpreter programs which provide motivated and talented staff with an opportunity to get more involved in the behind-the-scenes and administrative aspects of interpretation. Lead interpreters participate in ongoing research, program planning and evaluation, and on-site supervision and evaluation of staff. They also actively serve as interpretive trainers and are very good examples of Bob Birney's interpretive students. Many of them regularly read professional journals and literature and attend professional conferences and seminars.

Recently in the Midwest, interpreters participated in an unprecedented exchange. Since 1983, interpreters have gathered for an Interpreters Seminar, co-sponsored by MOMCC and ALHFAM. The gatherings are unique for a number of reasons. Each of the three seminars has had between 120–160 participants, the majority of whom were interpreters or volunteers who never before had had the opportunity to participate in a professional conference. Representatives from 30–50 museums located in eight states attended each seminar. Many of the seminar sessions were suggested, planned, and delivered by the interpreters themselves, often in teams from a variety of sites. Topics ranged from interpretive techniques and translating research into interpretation to using reproductions and developing a good period clothing program. There were numerous opportunities for informal sharing as well. The accommodations were dormitory-style which fostered much discussion long after the formal sessions were completed. Each conference also included a period meal and dance, complete with appropriate music and the majority of interpreters clad in their best period attire. Thanks to in-kind contributions from the host institutions and long hours of volunteer service from many organizers, the conference registration fees were kept very low which made the experience economically feasible for interpreters and volunteers. The participants' evaluations of the sessions were as perceptive as any professional conference and the resulting content quality was very high. By far the most rewarding aspect of these conferences was the change in attitude of the participants. One could almost watch them grow as professionals as they shared and solved mutual concerns and problems. The excitement level and respect for interpretation increases steadily as this midwestern experiment becomes a regular tradition.

The ramifications for the larger museum field of these changes in interpretive training and interpreters' attitudes about their jobs are difficult to predict precisely. But the overall effect of interpretive programs on an individual-site basis can be measured. Museum visitors are already

letting us know that they appreciate the change in treatment and attitude. Interpreters are more challenged and satisfied with their jobs and more staff are taking a lifelong learning approach, the ultimate of Bob Birney's "student." We are also seeing many applicants to professional museum studies training programs who received that first spark of inspiration for museum work as interpreters. Thank goodness we've come out of the dark ages; this new emphasis on concept, method, and professional exchange is much more invigorating.

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can perform at a difficult level; rather, trainers understand that their task is to see that a mass of people acquire the basics. And so we distinguish between basic training and advanced training. Trainers who are expected to handle basic training are expected to get everyone in their unit up to standard with only a few exceptions. Driver training is an example. Presumably driver training schools are excellent if they can teach anybody the rudiments of good basic driving.

How do we describe an excellent trainer? Such instructors maintain the trainee's motivation using a variety of techniques. They have sophisticated analytic skills as they follow the trainee's efforts. They usually follow a sequence of instruction that permits progressive building on what the trainee is doing well. They know how to set goals the trainee can reach in ascending order of difficulty. They try to modulate the effort required so the trainee has a sustained sense of progress, even if it is partial and unintegrated for awhile. Somehow they combine patience with demand for improvement.

Both these roles lead to a kind of sophistication over time and situations. Experienced trainers and trainees meet for yet another round of training, quickly size each other up, adjust to each other, and get the job done. Opera singers and voice coaches, professional golfers and their old pro, experienced computer programmers and the representative of the newest equipment are examples of this.

What does it take to be a good trainee? I suggested a little earlier that good trainees, first of all, are willing to undergo training. They value it. Second, good trainees concentrate on what they are being offered; they inhibit and restrain any tendencies they may have to raise questions about the training itself. The best trainees are people who willingly place themselves in the hands of the trainer. The poorest trainees are those who persist in believing that they can actually learn the skill or the task without help from a trainer and/or that they can improve on what the trainer is doing. When we describe trainee behavior in this way, there is a great temptation to speculate as to whether or not some personalities are born trainees, others are born trainers, and others are born otherwise. I have no intention of pursuing that line of speculation except to comment that it is almost impossible to grow up in this society without being a trainee several times in the course of one's life. It is probable that to be a successful trainee does involve tolerance of frustration. Even if the trainee does not have faith in the trainer, he must act like a good trainee to maximize his benefits. Obviously it is better to be a volunteer than a draftee. So, is the Colonial Williamsburg Department of Interpretive Education engaged in training?

Before addressing that question, I wish to put forth a second term—study. Obviously if trainees train, we expect students to study. *Webster's* is able to do much more with this word. Instead of two definitions it offers seven. I suggest we are interested in the following: "application of the mental faculties to the acquisition of knowledge"; or "a careful examination or analysis of a phenomenon, development, or question." Of course *Webster's* cannot resist "the activity or work of a student." And then there are more specialized definitions, too.

Once again I suggest that Webster is missing the mark although the first definition points us in the right direction. What happens if we subject a particular phenomenon to a long and careful analysis? The answer lies in the observation that the more one studies a field, and the more one learns about the field, the more interesting the questions become that can be put to the field. I said earlier that the implication of training is that we finally master one of the several right ways of doing things. The implication of study is that if we carry it on long enough we become scholars. Scholars are people with a great breadth of comprehension and knowledge which they expand year by year. Therefore, if one initiates studies and becomes a student, the implication is that the process is endless.

There is a second implication, too. As one masters the techniques of study, there is a progressive divergence of possibility, an opening up of creativity, a capacity for seeing things from more perspectives, of producing a wider range of questions and weaving the answers to those questions into an ever larger understanding of the subject at hand. If we look at educational situations and ask what do we expect people to get out of their educational efforts, it makes a big difference whether we think they are trainees or students. Just as all of us have had the experience of being trainees, many of us have been given the opportunity to become students. Students, too, have to be highly motivated. They, too, have to want to learn, but, unlike trainees, students are increasingly in charge of their own educational programs. Students increasingly generate their studies for themselves.

Earlier I shied away from calling a teacher a trainer. Obviously I hold that a teacher should face students and not trainees. What do we expect from a good teacher? First

of all, one teaches by personal example, whether intentionally or not. Successful teachers are curious, probing, analytical, and always projecting a sense of wanting to know more, of informing others so as to set up for them important questions. Teachers listen to students, reward inquiry, and demand study. They challenge thought of poor quality, expose trivial questions, and, above all, hold the student intellectually responsible for personal utterance in speech and writing. Somehow they combine compassion with rigorous standards.

Not surprisingly there are fewer students than trainees in the world. That is a pity because study is much more personally rewarding than training. And oddly enough, there is a greater likelihood that study can be self-taught, and, once mastered, the arts of study sustain self-education.

Now I may have exaggerated this distinction between being a trainee and being a student, but I honestly don't think I've exaggerated it much. I do think there is an enormous amount of confusion in our institutions of higher learning about the balance between these two rather distinct educational activities. I think that people who try desperately to prepare themselves for a job are defining their opportunities in trainee terms. They may be doing themselves a great disservice if they find themselves in jobs in which self-instruction on the job is the way to success. At any rate, we do have to ask what happens, finally, on the job as a consequence of training and study.

Here, I think, the results are fairly clear. For interpretation, at least, someone whose effort never gets much beyond that of a good trainee is probably going to perform for our visitors in fairly sterotyped ways. On the other hand, those who have combined their training with serious efforts to study the history of the colonial capital in all its many forms should be people who are constantly increasing what they can tell our visitors.

Where in our interpretive situations do we require training? Obviously we require it in communication skills and in interpersonal skills in dealing with the public. These are skills that can be learned even by the shyest and most inhibited among us to say nothing of those who don't know when to keep quiet. We certainly do have a large body of valid information that we expect everyone to master. In that sense, it takes a sizable amount of training to get all of this material straight. But, with that accomplished, one's study is ready to begin; and study follows along lines of personal interest and personal temperament. We never have to justify our interest in some particular part of the story.

Study is flexible. Study leads to comprehension. Study means that, if we don't know the answer to the visitor's question as put, we can still respond to the question in a way that is helpful to the inquirer despite the fact that we can't provide a definite answer. Now because the goal is to provide this experience to visitors, I have been concentrating on how training and study, which in my title I call education, serve the visitor. But there is a marvelous payoff in all of this that is not often talked about. To the extent that an interpreter serves the visitors well, the chief beneficiary of that achievement is the interpreter himself or herself. There is simply nothing as satisfying as achieving confidence and a breadth of understanding, achieving command, if you will, of a body of material. It is a resource that can always be used for personal pleasure and the pleasure of others. It leads to acquaintanceship with a wide network of people who have similar interests and who are a resource for growth, who provide the critiques that must come from somebody else for us to improve. Earlier I referred to the unusual profile of our interpretive group at Colonial Williamsburg. Obviously we have a lot of people for whom the most productive role of the moment is trainee. But we also have a great many people who long since became students.

Robert C. Birney is a senior vice president and William Tramposch is Director of Interpretive Education and Special Program Officer.

Living History: Getting Beyond Nostalgia?

by Fred E.H. Schroeder

The terms "nostalgia" and "living history" do not lend themselves to hard-and-fast definition; the former is a matter of personal feelings while the latter describes a spectrum of different museum techniques. The original meaning of *nostalgia* is rather interesting, being a medical term invented to describe the extreme homesickness suffered by young soldiers. No longer a part of the medical glossary, nostalgia continues to describe symptoms of longing for a place or time of security from the tense complexities of modern adult life. Thus, nostalgia is still homesickness, but the "home" has become the "good old days," a never-never-land of the past when live supposedly were simpler, unhurried, unthreatening—and quaintly charming.

Living history is a term used for those interpretive programs of historical groups and museums that attempt to get away from traditional exhibit cases, dioramas, and reconstructions by reenacting history in historical settings—more or less. Probably the most extreme versions of living history have been attempted in Great Britain and Scandinavia where early medieval and Neolithic rural communities have been recreated with volunteer residents who are sequestered for extended periods of time, utilizing early technology and agricultural methods. These are not usually reenacted for visitors who would interrupt the experiments. In the United States, there are many groups of enthusiastic amateurs who indulge in living history as a hobby. In New England, there are those who reenact Revolutionary War camps and sorties; in the Midwest, living history voyageurs and fur traders rendezvous at several places during the year; and throughout the Old South, the Confederacy rises again and again. Like the European living history "laboratories," these amateur groups are given to meticulous detailing of historical materials such as clothing, tools, and weapons, and they try to reenact several days and nights of historical living when they can.

Among living history museums that are designed for public education and tourism as well as research, Plimoth Plantation, in Massachusetts, is probably the purest, employing first-person interpretation, where the living history residents not only make use of seventeenth-century technology, but also play the roles of individual persons from the past, speak a seventeenth-century English dialect, and remain totally unaware of any "future" events—after the year 1627. Most other living history museums, such as Old Sturbridge Village, also in Massachusetts, modify the first-person role playing so that the historical residents, fully costumed and working with historical techniques, can yet converse with visitors as modern people. Colonial Williamsburg, in Virginia, runs the gamut of living history from costumed waiters serving martinis to costumed craftsmen explaining how they work with eighteenth-century tools and skilled professional actors performing first-person roles from scripts and interacting with "visitors from the future."

In other words, living history can range from costumed tour guides to actors performing prepared materials, from craft demonstrations to hobbyists doing historical playacting or historical researchers studying the complex interactions of people, things, and environments of the past.

In spite of the varying degrees of role playing, however, living history programs "live" because of a recognition that history—life of the past— is not simply historic things arranged in an exhibit case. Neither is it simply abstract

events to be analyzed nor grand themes and concepts that give order to our heritage of memory. A second common characteristic that derives from the human element is that living history is a dynamic interpretation, not merely in the facts of movement and voices, but in the possibilities for genuine interaction with visitors.

However, the most important characteristic of living history programs for museum education is that the programs demand very careful historical research into *everyday* lifestyles of *ordinary* people. That is, one cannot prepare a good living history about one of Ethan Allen's Green Mountain Boys without looking into his kit as well as at his weapons; one cannot interpret a Victorian mansion without studying the duties, preparation, and compensation of the house servants; one cannot portray the life of a 1910 farm wife without looking into recipes, sewing patterns, mail order catalogs, child rearing, and health care.

These all suggest that living history is a way of getting beyond nostalgia. After all, nostalgia is a comfortable disease; nostalgia selects only the pleasant memories of home or history, as suggested by a television commercial of a few years back: baseball, hot dogs, apple pie, and Chevrolet. And yet, to *really* do living history, the jingle should continue: failures, T.B., violence, and poverty. Unfortunately, (or fortunately) this is rarely the case in living history programs. Living history most certainly does expose details of life of the past that dispel much of the good-old-days nostalgia, but the overall view of Old Sturbridge, Colonial Williamsburg, and even Plimoth Plantation tends to reinforce nostalgia for reasons that are sometimes conscious, sometimes unconscious. Here is a short tally of unpleasant realities that living history programs are not likely to relive:

- Miscreants locked in stocks were pelted with manure and rotten food.
- Fashionable women took arsenic pills to achieve pale complexions.
- Most diseases (prior to 1860) were treated by bleeding, raising blisters, and purging with laxatives having a high mercury content.
- Troublesome babies were soothed with opium and alcohol.
- Troublesome children were beaten severely.
- Menstrual flow was absorbed with rags that were washed and hung out to dry.
- Most "little red schoolhouses" were not red, were poorly staffed and maintained, and did not have an enclosed privy for teacher or pupils.

There is more, but it is clear that fully accurate, detailed living history would be intolerable because it could be a dangerous as well as an unpleasant experience for museum visitors, who often want history to confirm nostalgia rather than to challenge it.

Here then is my position in this position paper: Living history is an exciting, enlightening, and entertaining technique for historical interpretation and research; in its detailed reenactment of everyday activities of ordinary people, living history has immense potential as a corrective both to nostalgic, oversimplified ideas of the past and to "great man/great events" history that ignores and distorts the lives of the majority of past people. But living history programs by themselves are incapable of depicting all aspects of life. Neither can they place the historical time and place that they reenact into the larger perspectives of historical change and evolution; that is, as educational programs, they do not teach *history*. Therefore, living history should be supplemented and augmented by traditional interpretive techniques, such as case exhibits, lectures, booklets, timelines, media programs, and so on.

Finally, it is my position that nonprofit historical groups should strive continuously toward this sort of balanced, broadened, and accurate understanding of our human heritage, for nostalgia is not only a disease, but also big business. The comfort of nostalgic escape is guaranteed by the big business of theme parks, restaurant decor, and "olde tyme shoppes." The leavening of historical knowledge that informs and tempers our views of today's world is not so comfortably attained, but it is essential to responsible citizenship and self-respect. It is a heritage for tomorrow.

Fred E.H. Schroeder is Professor of Humanities at the University of Minnesota, Duluth. He prepared this paper in November 1982, for the Governor's Conference on the Future of Vermont's Heritage. It was published by the Vermont Council on the Humanities and Public Issues, and is reprinted with permission.

City as Museum: Building as Artifact

Chicago as case study

by Emily Hotaling Eig
with Laura L. Harris

The idea of looking at buildings as artifacts is not new; architectural historians often deal with architecture in a curatorial fashion. However, the concept of a city and its buildings as a museum filled with exhibits is not commonly explored. While most American cities maintain substantive collections of historic architecture, few publicly recognize the value of their holdings or encourage public appreciation. Chicago is one city that does think of itself as a museum, and one that does its collection proud.

Considered by most architectural historians as the birthplace of modern American architecture, the city boasts some of the finest examples of twentieth-century architecture seen in this country. Its collection is vast and rich. The Rookery (Burnham and Root, 1886), the Auditorium Building (Adler and Sullivan, 1889), The Monadnock (Burnham and Root, 1891), Marshall Field and Company Store (D. H. Burnham and Company, 1893), the Reliance Building (D. H. Burnham and Company, 1895), and Carson Pirie Scott and Company Store (Louis Sullivan, 1899, 1903–04) exemplify seminal design theory of the turn of the century. Structures such as the Illinois Institute of Technology Campus (Mies van der Rohe, et al., 1942–58), Marina City (Bertrand Goldberg, 1964, 1967), and Sears Tower (Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, 1974) are just samplings of mid-century excellence. And the city contin-

ues to add to its collection with the recent work of new designers such as Gerald Horn of Holabird & Root, William Drake of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, and Helmet Jahn of Murphy/Jahn.

Unlike most American cities, Chicago has learned to appreciate and enjoy its architectural collection. Perhaps one reason for this understanding of architecture as artifact can be traced to the strong association between local museums and the emergence of the American Beaux Arts movement at the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893. The Art Institute, designed in 1892 by Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge, introduced the aesthetics of the Ecole des Beaux Arts to the city. The creation of the Field Museum of Natural History was, in fact, the result of the Exposition itself. In an effort to insure that objects displayed at the Exposition should have a permanent home in Chicago, the fair's Palace of Fine Arts was designed to shelter the fledgling collection until 1921, when the present Field was built to the design of Daniel F. Burnham and Company. The Palace, originally designed by Charles Atwood in 1893 as a temporary structure and generally considered the finest structure at the Exposition, was rehabilitated during the 1930s by Graham, Anderson, Probst and White to serve as the Museum of Science and Industry.

The treatment of Frank Lloyd Wright's brilliant 1909 Robie House is an example of how the city works as a museum. Considered his quintessential Prairie-style house, the Robie is owned by the University of Chicago. In recognition of the significance of this building, the house is generally open to the public and is used by the university on a regular basis. The university itself provides informal tours of its Henry Ives Cobb-designed campus, one of the most famous planned academic settings in the country. The vast number of structures provides ample opportunity to study the artifacts in juxtaposition. For example, the 1923 Gothic Revival-style Tribune Tower, the result of an international architectural competition won by Raymond Hood and John Howells, sits across from 333 North Michigan Avenue, a building built to the 1927 plans of Holabird and Roche following a design derived from Eliel Saarinen's remarkably modern second-prize entry in the Tribune competition. The city, as well, has designated numerous historic districts formally recognizing the contribution of historic buildings.

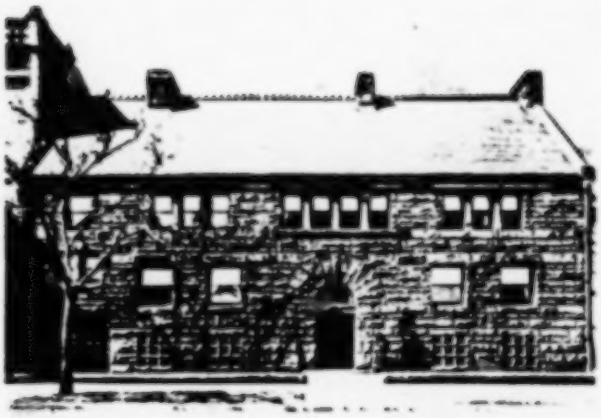
Chicago, however, not only boasts a fine collection. The city, through private and public agencies, is a model for excellence in architectural museum education. Its "education department" is both well-staffed and well-organized. Through the active educational and promotional efforts of two nonprofit organizations, Chicago's collection is interpreted to hundreds of people every day.

The Chicago Architecture Foundation was formed in 1966 to save the historic Glessner House. The only remaining building in Chicago by the outstanding American architect Henry Hobson Richardson, this excellent example of his personal interpretation of the Romanesque Revival prompted a surge of appreciation for the city's older buildings. The successful fight to preserve the Glessner House led the foundation to make its home base there as it turned its energies toward the building's rehabilitation and the expansion of public awareness of the city's rich architectural fabric. Today, in addition to operating the 1886 Glessner House and the 1836 Greek Revival-style Henry B. Clarke House (Chicago's oldest surviving residence) as historic house museums, the foundation is responsible for hundreds of walking, bus, bicycle, and boat tours throughout the city and its environs. Walking tours of Graceland Cemetery, Frank Lloyd Wright structures in Oak Park, and the Gold Coast are offered on regular weekly schedules, while a walking tour of the Loop is given three times every day. Brown bag lunchtime tours, weekend excursions, children's tours, and visits to architectural exhibitions fill out a year-round program of architectural appreciation and education.

The tour guides are all well-trained volunteers. Docents must complete a fourteen-week training program that covers extensive material on architecture, the city's history, and information specifically relating to the buildings highlighted on the tours. The large docent group has earned a fine reputation from museum professionals and from an appreciative public. In fact, public interest led to the development of Archicenter, the foundation's exhibition gallery and lecture hall. Lecture and workshop series, exhibitions of current architectural issues and happenings, discounts on tours and museum merchandise, a bimonthly newsletter, and a fine book store attract a large locally-based membership.

In addition to this membership, each year an estimated fifty thousand visitors are served by foundation activities, thirty-five thousand of them taking one or more tours. The foundation is promoted by local and state tourism agencies, as well as through travel agents. The Illinois Department of Tourism publishes and distributes a brochure listing the foundation's tours and special events. Beyond this, the foundation offers slide shows to civic and educational groups, and on request will develop specialized tours to meet special interests and needs. This adept promotion has gone a long way toward establishing both the foundation's and the city's association with historic buildings.

The pride in Chicago architecture extends beyond the urban center. Oak Park, a nearby suburb, was Frank Lloyd Wright's home during the early years of his career and holds the largest concentration of his work to be found in any geographical area. In 1974, the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio Foundation (FLWHS) was established to save Wright's famous personal residence in Oak Park. Construction of the home and studio began in 1889 when Wright was only 22 years old and continued for a six-year period. The original design and changes accomplished by the architect over these years offer a unique opportunity to study his early career and aesthetic development. Since acquiring the buildings in 1974 (with financial support



Credit: Courtesy of Chicago Architecture Foundation

Survival of Chicago's Glessner House in the mid-60s sparked public awareness of the city's rich architectural history.

from the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Endangered Buildings Program), the FLWHS Foundation has been responsible for operating the house as a museum and for restoration to its appearance in 1909, the last year of Wright's residence. The nonprofit organization has a membership of over 1,200. Dedicated to the expensive task of restoring the house and studio, it relies on admissions, creative fundraising, and a strong volunteer corps. A special aspect of the home and studio experience is that, since 1974, the group has been giving daily tours while the buildings have been under active historic restoration.

Obviously, the house is a popular stop for architectural devotees and attracts over 34,000 visitors a year from around the world. Tours of the house and the adjacent studio are available on a daily basis, as are walking tours of the surrounding neighborhood where twenty-five houses form the core of the historic district. To accommodate the large number of foreign visitors drawn to the home and studio each year, recorded tours in a wide variety of languages are available. Special programs sponsored by the FLWHS Foundation include adult lecture series and programs for students between fourth and ninth grades. Some of the most recent lecture topics included "Current Chicago Architecture"; "Women in Chicago Architecture"; "Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan 1893-1914"; "American Public Sculpture: On and Off the Wall"; "The Coverings We Live In: Clothes as Architecture and Architecture as Clothes"; and "Sears Pre-Cuts: Your Dream House in a Box Car." Each May, the FLWHS Foundation makes its most spectacular offering of the year when it sponsors a house walk-featuring the interiors of ten privately owned Frank Lloyd Wright houses.

Like the Chicago Architecture Foundation, the tours of the house and the historic district are presented by an all-volunteer group. Although the volunteers number over four hundred, the possibility of becoming a home and studio docent is so desirable that the FLWHS Foundation is forced to turn away people each March when the eight-week training session begins. Training is intense and includes lectures and audiovisual presentations on architectural history and tour skills guaranteed to provide insight into the Wrightian mystique and to Chicago's contribution to twentieth-century architecture.

The Chicago Historical Society, unlike many similar groups devoted to social and political history, regards architectural history as a major focus. In 1892, the Society was responsible for the construction of a Henry Ives Cobb-designed headquarters building that is now a city landmark. Its current home was designed in 1932 by Daniel Burnham's successor firm, Graham, Anderson, Probst and White. The Society owns a strong collection of architectural drawings, photographs, and papers relating to the architectural development of Chicago and the Midwest. The Architectural Department is responsible for exhibitions interpreting both its own collection and delving into corresponding issues of Chicago's architectural past.

Even the Art Institute of Chicago regards architecture with respect. Daniel Burnham's papers are housed under its roof, amid a fine collection of related materials. Frank Lloyd Wright is collected with the same passion that is usually reserved for the finest Renaissance painters. The museum began preserving architectural drawings in 1918 when the Burnham Library was formed as a repository for the illustrious Chicago architect's papers. In 1981, the board of trustees formally established a Department of Architecture. This important step that moved architecture into the realm of curatorship expanded the Burnham Library's organizational tasks of preserving, studying, and exhibiting the Library's holdings to include the collection and exhibition of relevant papers and artifacts and the preparation of books and catalogs. This vast group now forms a unique collection of architectural materials unparalleled in any major, general American art museum.

The Art Institute displays portions of its collection in a permanent galley and expects to add a second architectural "fragment" gallery next year. The first exhibitions to result from the new department highlighted the Art Institute collection and were just the beginning of an important program now scheduling four major shows a year. A number of the shows produced by the department have traveled to other cities, and the attending scholarly publications are available in architecturally-oriented bookshops around the country. The Art Institute also offers its audience the chance to see major architectural shows developed by other groups in the United States and around the world.

Increasing public interest in architecture can be seen in the expanding viewing statistics and in the growing membership in the department's support group. "The Architecture Society" is formed of museum supporters who provide additional support for the Department of Architecture with a $25 donation above the cost of the Art

Institute membership program. Participants enjoy opening receptions, lectures by prominent architects, travel programs oriented to architectural interests, and other special events. The Art Institute's appreciation of architecture marks it as the outstanding interpreter and contributor to the public's understanding of architecture.

Yes, Chicago is a fine museum—one that has learned that the best way to maintain a good collection is by helping the public to appreciate it with active and careful interpretation.

Emily Hotaling Eig is an architectural historian and partner in Traceries, a research and consulting firm concerned with architecture and preservation.

Laura L. Harris, who provided research assistance, majored in historic preservation and architectural history. She has been working with Traceries since May, 1984.

Correction

Due to a misunderstanding, authorship of the Midwest regional report on "The Old-Time Radio Workshop" program at the Chicago Historical Society in the most recent *Journal*, "Museum Educators at Work," (V. 10, No. 2, pp. 11-12) was inadvertently incorrectly attributed. Carole Krucoff, Associate Educator at the Society, wrote the piece describing the program; Cynthia Mark Hummel, Midwest reporter assigned by EdCom, identified the program as newsworthy and submitted the article for publication. We apologize for this error and any harm it may have caused.

—*The Editors*

Learning by Design: Architecture in The Classroom

by Alan R. Sandler

Architecture is only one of the many forces affecting the environment, but it is one of the most important. Today's architects are concerned with education because they are concerned with achieving and preserving quality in the environment. For this to happen on a meaningful scale in the United States, there must be a widespread public expectation and demand for quality in the environment. Aware citizens can make better choices. They require buildings designed to a human scale, streets designed for safety, furniture designed to fit the human body, classrooms designed for learning, parks designed for rest and recreation, and public buildings designed to express the values of the community.

This designed environment is the architect's particular area of domain. What is built, why it is built, and where it is built are all a part of the profession's responsibility. The architect, in collaboration with the client, strives to achieve an architecture of consequence. Architecture has a personal and often dramatic effect on everyone. The architect relies on the public's participation and interest in the design process, for it is that interest that stimulates the architect to achieve work of significance. The public should be an educated participant.

Architecture is the integration of art and science in a design for people. No other art form so completely pervades our daily lives. We live, work, study, and play in our buildings, and our surroundings affect our moods and temperaments. Certain buildings, parks, plazas, and streets lift our spirits; others diminish them. If we are to influence our architecture—and its lasting effects—we must embark on a strong and pervasive education effort.

One approach to bringing architecture into the classroom has been to integrate it into other subjects. Architecture is not meant to be a separate study. Rather, it complements and often heightens understanding of traditional subjects. For instance, in social studies, architecture can be shown as a direct outgrowth of historical situations and changes. Study the historical growth and development of your town by looking at the history of its buildings. In science, the systems of a building might be compared to those of the human body. Plumbing and ventilation, akin to digestive and respiratory systems, can be used to show the similarities between a building as a machine and a body as an organism. Math activities can focus on measuring and the use of scale in drawings and building design. The classroom can be measured by using one student as a basic measure. English classes can write stories and poems about buildings visited or the history of your town.

Since 1979, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) has been developing a comprehensive education program, *Learning by Design*, a system of educational products and services about architecture and the built environment for all education sectors. A key objective is to provide information resources to inform the education community, as well as to make connections for developing architect-educator partnerships. Central to this has been the development of *The Sourcebook*. A compendium of environmental education teaching resources, this notebook-style reference provides a comprehensive and convenient system of teaching resources for all learning levels, from kindergarten through adult education.

What follows are several excerpts from *The Sourcebook* that demonstrate active, innovative programs and books that bring architecture into the classroom.

Beaumont, U.S.A. Beaumont Art Museum, 111 Ninth Street, Beamont, TX 77702.

Beaumont, U.S.A. provides an innovative approach to the teaching of American and local history through the study of architecture and environmental awareness. Designed as a supplement to the eighth-grade history curriculum, *Beaumont, U.S.A.* employs the local community and its architecture, to give students a better understanding of history and the process of historical investigation. The program places particular emphasis on architecture as a fine art with a valuable history unto itself, reflecting the influence of the Beaumont Art Museum and the Beaumont Heritage Society on the development of this program. Local buildings are used to teach about architectural styles, and the downtown area is approached from aesthetic, historical, and functional perspectives. The program makes use of multiple resources: a well-researched and carefully organized handbook; history and art teachers, museum docents, resident architects, volunteer community resource people; community institutions such as the Beaumont Art Museum and the Beaumont Heritage Society; and the built environment of Beaumont itself.

Beaumont, U.S.A. is a particularly fine example of the convergence of community resources for the development of environmental education opportunities and of effective linkage between cultural institutions and the school system. It has further significance as an example of integrating a well-constructed educational program into an exciting school curriculum. Finally, *Beaumont, U.S.A.* serves as a fine model for making history and the built environment particularly relevant to the lives and interests of its students. Through a handbook that continually relates concepts and events to the individual student's frame of reference and through the use of students' neighborhoods and the community for experiential learning, *Beaumont, U.S.A.* goes a long way in making tangible connections between the past and present and between the student, school, and community.

The success of the Beaumont program appears to be based on three critical factors: the collaboration of the Art Museum and the Heritage Society, which produced a blend of expertise and resources and balanced the administrative load; the practical nature of the educational program, which engaged students in active explorations of their community and its architectural heritage; and the commitment and enthusiasm of the local architect-in-residence, who worked closely with students and teachers as well as docents and project administrators.

Street Smart. VISION, Inc. The Center for Environmental Design and Education, 219 Concord Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138.

This multimedia program fosters visual literacy within the immediate context of the built environment, the street scene. With sound filmstrips, posters, and activity guides, *Street Smart* offers elementary and middle school students an imaginative excursion through the streets where they live, inspiring pride in the heritage of their built environment and confidence in its future maintenance and enhancement. The program, as the name implies, focuses on the street as a microcosm of the built environment and fashions exercises and investigative activities around the multiple dimensions of a specific street. A case study of a neighborhood street is utilized where the resources and program are adaptable to any street in any community. Furthermore, the program is adaptable to cities, suburbs, or small towns. For where there are schools, there are streets, and most often neighborhoods.

Because of its highly visual approach to learning about the built environment, *Street Smart* is a unique educational resource. The few multimedia programs that are available elsewhere primarily consider the natural environment or sophisticated concepts in city planning. *Street Smart* is also special in its attention to early childhood development. Materials are based on an analysis of the child's exposure to the built environment and corresponding stages in the child's problem-solving process. The program is adaptable to different age groups and subject areas, and is highly flexible in its use by teachers whose only qualification need be interest and enthusiasm in learning about the human habitat.

The impetus for *Street Smart* was the planing and environmental design experiences of VISION, Inc., a public, nonprofit organization committed to improving the quality of the built environment through education and design. VISION provides consulting services and carries out research in urban design, neighborhood conservation, environmental education, and historic interpretation to government agencies, neighborhood associations, schools, and private organizations.

Building: The Fight Against Gravity. Mario Salvadori. Charles Scribner and Son, 12 Vreeland Avenue, Totowa, NJ 07512.

Building reveals the world of structure: from simple enclosed space, through basic structural principles and the forces of nature, to aesthetic implications of structural design. *Building* draws on history, international environments, and simple classroom models and experiments to make its points. The author, an engineer and mathematician who obviously enjoys his subject and teaching children, draws upon his expertise and experiences as a guest in many classrooms. This book is organized into fifteen chapters, each of which could inspire multiple lesson plans. The text builds on itself sequentially, and information is carefully interrelated across concepts and chapters. The topics range from specific building forms and materials to structural components, beams, cables, arches, and natural forces to be withstood.

Building is a versatile resource. A good reference for

teachers interested in structures, it also can be used with students as a text or reading assignment. Ideas can be discussed in class, models built, and individual projects undertaken to extend the textual material. *Building* is a solid base for introducing engineering concepts with a minimum of mathematical skills.

Teaching from this book requires no specialized engineering background. Structures are illustrated through simple models and references to the human body. All experiments can be demonstrated within a class period or less with easily obtained materials. Educators interested in any kind of classroom building projects would well be served to read *Building* and keep it in the classroom.

Environmental Encounter: Experiences in Decision-making for the Built and the Natural Environment. Joanne Henderson Pratt, James Pratt, Sarah Barnett Moore, and William T. Moore. Reverchon Press, P.O. Box 19647, Dallas, TX 75219.

Environmental Encounter provides a well-constructed and tested set of learning activities about the environment. In its own words, *Encounter* "leads the participant(s) through a series of experiences so exaggerated that they will be able to organize and cognify their impressions (about) the impact the individual has on the environment as well as the impact the environment has on the individual." It embodies a multidisciplinary approach reflecting the backgrounds of its authors who together span the fields of architecture, history, psychology, and science.

The twenty-nine chapters of this book are interwoven with several conceptual strands: orientation to the environment; receiving and organizing sensory data; living in the community; and synthesis of individual experiences with both the immediate environment and the total environmental system in which we live. The chapters are enhanced by graphics and marginal comments by the authors, suggestions for further exploration, a checklist of questions to assess student learning, and additional background resources.

Each chapter of *Encounter* has a teaching core of one to ten learning experiences that vary in length from one hour to one week. This resource may be expanded into a full course or abbreviated for workshop training or seminars. The material can be adapted by trained teachers for use with primary and secondary students as well as college students.

Historic Preservation Education. Carol D. Holden, Gary L. Olsen, Michele R. Olsen, and Raymond H. Lytle. Olsen-Lytle Architects, 315 S. State Street, Champaign, IL 75219.

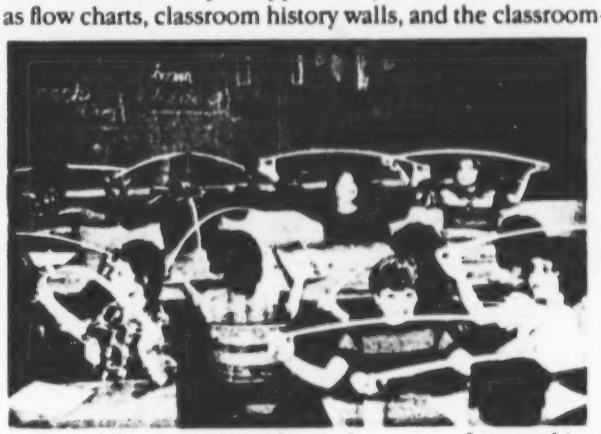
Historic Preservation Education is a teaching guide for developing an aesthetic and historic appreciation of the built environment. The book emphasizes the visual quality of architectural form and approaches historic preservation through developing aesthetic appreciation for form, scale, line, texture, and balance. Awarded *Progressive Architecture's* 1981 Research Award, this teaching guide was developed by a team of architects who believes "that children can be taught to use their senses to find value in the permanent, the carefully crafted, the beautifully structured world of man and nature."

Major sections of this resource include aesthetic perception, environmental discovery, styles, city development, preservation, planning, and a history of Illinois architecture. An illustrated glossary and resource inventory are included also. Structured as a term course, any part of the book can be adapted to an independent unit or extend an existing curriculum. In each chapter there are specific sequences of activities defined for the teacher with concepts, main ideas, and facts. Regardless of a teacher's background, the explicit instructions and basic information on architecture and architectural history allow any teacher to feel comfortable learning with his or her students. Adaptable to any age group, *Historic Preservation Education* has been used in elementary classrooms as well as with graduate students of design. The latter sections, although tailored to Illinois architecture, can serve as models for developing other local and state profiles.

City Building Educational Program. Doreen G. Nelson. Center for City Building Education Programs, 2210 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 303, Santa Monica, CA 90403.

City Building Educational Program is a unique, interdisciplinary approach to elementary education which uses the functions of a city as an educational strategy that spans subject areas, grade levels, and traditional curriculum.

This book depicts a year-long experience (all day, every day for elementary students; three hours a day, three days a week for older students) that structures progressively more complicated activities around four overlapping phases: the individual and the individual's relationship to objects, organizations, the community and its environment. The process of "transformation" is the central educational technique supported by classroom tools such as flow charts, classroom history walls, and the classroom-



Credit: Courtesy of Howard Wolf

School children explore the arch as part of an architectural awareness curriculum.

city. Each student progresses from individual activities to increasingly complex group-organized functions within the classroom-city.

City Building is a highly developed process, piloted and tested in the Los Angeles school system and adapted by dozens of public and private schools, museums, and theaters around the country. The process is documented in an architectural consultant manual. This program requires intensive, continuous teacher training and the coordinated efforts of consulting community resources. Thus a major commitment is required on the part of the teachers and the school administration. Short of this, *City Building* remains an exemplary program from which much can be learned.

Our Man-Made Environment: Book Seven. Group for Environmental Education, Inc. MIT Press, 28 Carleton Street, Cambridge, MA 02147.

Our Man-Made Environment: Book Seven is a student workbook on how people interact with their built environment: designing, building, and changing the man-made environment. *Book Seven* engages junior high students in an exploration of the basic dimensions of the environment around them. It is organized around four basic questions: What is the man-made environment? Why do we build our environment? What determines the form of our environment? How do we change our man-made environment? Each chapter includes personable text and provocative graphics with questions, activities, and punch-out materials for model building.

Book Seven may be used for self-instruction, but there are myriad opportunities for class and small group interactions. The workbook is best understood sequentially and provides a well-structured unit of study. While teacher preparation is not a requirement, close familiarity with the unit and specific exercises are advised. This is one of several materials designed by the Group for Environmental Education (GEE!). The GEE! materials are the result of a collaboration among architects, graphic designers, teachers, and curriculum specialists.

Architect-Museum Educator Partnership

Architects and museum educators have special but different kinds of knowledge and skills. In order to study architecture, it is critical that architects unite their special sensibilities and graphic skills with educators' special knowledge of the learning objectives and needs of their students. Architects and educators need to be aware of each other's goals and needs, how these goals are interrelated, and how to work closely to support each other. Together they need to discuss what architects can bring to the students and devise activities in the topics that are of most interest to the educator, whether they be in specific subject areas or dealing with the career and the profession of architecture. Planning is the key.

By studying architecture—those surroundings that touch each of us daily—museum educators and students, working with architects, can discover that they can make a difference in determining the quality of their own environment.

Alan R. Sandler is Director of Public Education at The American Institute of Architects. The Sourcebook: Learning by Design *is available from the AIA Service Corporation, Fulfillment Service, 44 Industrial Park Drive, P.O. Box 753, Waldorf, MD 20601. The price is $11.03.*

Pulling Together to Interpret the Silk City

by John A. Herbst

Neighboring museums and historic sites often share an unfortunate history of institutional rivalries—seeing themselves as competitors for monies, membership, and visitation. These rivalries, developed over many years and fostered by the personality wars of trustees and directors long gone, can prevent the cultural community from pulling together to work more effectively with the public.

Three museums in the area of Paterson, New Jersey, attempted, largely successfully, to reverse this trend by cooperating to sponsor a joint exhibition, "Life and Times in Silk City," funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Focusing on the impact of the silk industry on the people of the city of Paterson from 1880-1925, the three institutions utilized the natural historic advantage of each headquarters site for interpretation, pooled staff and institutional resources, collectively raised funds, and heightened public awareness of the existence of its cultural resources.

Each institution had separate histories that in many ways were representative of the evolution of collecting agencies in this country. The Passaic County Historical Society was founded in 1924 by a group of antiquarian-minded history buffs, supported by several prominent wealthy Paterson residents including Mrs. Garret Augustus Hobart, widow of William McKinley's vice president. Since 1927, the Society was housed in Lambert Castle, once the home of silk manufacturer Catholina Lambert. During its existence, the Society collected widely and

rather haphazardly. This approach brought the institution invaluable objects but also responsibility for a large, unfocused collection which needed curatorial and conservation attention. The Society hired its first professionally trained director in 1979.

The Paterson Museum began as a collection of natural history objects in the Free Public Library. In 1925, a curator was hired and in 1927 the museum was housed temporarily in a former carriage house next to the Library's main branch. The temporary nature of this location hampered the museum's ability to store collections and mount exhibits. In 1982, responding to a report prepared by a citizen's committee, the new mayor of Paterson ordered the museum to move to the first floor of the renovated 1874 Rogers Locomotive Mill near the Great Falls Historic District. This move, however, coincided with the implementation of the new city budget, introduced by the outgoing mayor, which caused a one-third drop in the museum's appropriation and a cut in the staff from five to two professionals. Owing to the vagaries of civil service, the museum, now in a visible role in the historic district, was staffed by two mineralogists. A decreased budget hampered the museum's ability to staff and even outfit the new facility—containing nearly three times as much space as its former home had provided.

The American Labor Museum was the newcomer to the Paterson museum community. The museum began in 1980 as a private, membership organization seeking to acquire the Botto House Historic Site as the headquarters for a national labor museum. Once the home of Italian-born silk workers, the Botto House, just at the Paterson border in the streetcar suburb of Haledon, was a focal point during the epic 1913 Paterson Silk Strike. In 1982, it was designated a National Historic Landmark and plans were finalized by the museum organization to purchase the property, restore period rooms and gardens, and create contemporary gallery space to "celebrate the history of working people." The museum opened its doors to the public in May 1983, with the opportunity to set out in some new directions, but also with the burden of major fundraising to support its ongoing operation. It was the American Labor Museum who initiated and submitted the proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities in April 1983, to sponsor "Life and Times in Silk City."

The three museums had a history of sporadic cooperative efforts. An exhibit on the works of area sculptor Gaetano Federici, sponsored by the Passaic County Historical Society, was actually constructed by the staff of the Paterson Museum which had the tools and equipment for fabrication. The Passaic County Historical Society loaned exhibit furniture and period household items for the opening of the American Labor Museum. Finally, the director of the Labor Museum had served for a number of years on the board of trustees of the Society and had previously spent two years as curator of history at the Paterson Museum. The Society and the American Labor Museum shared key trustees who served on both boards. This background of previous working relationships helped to prepare plans for a major cooperative project.

The richness of Paterson's industrial heritage provided excellent historical material to interpret. Founded in 1792, around the Great Falls of the Passaic, by the Society for Establishing Useful Manufacturers, Paterson was part of Alexander Hamilton's vision of an industrial America. The first planned industrial center in the nation, Paterson's raceway system was designed by Pierre L'Enfant. By the mid-nineteenth century, Paterson mills were producing cotton, linen, paper, machinery, and locomotives. In 1841, John Ryle, an immigrant from Macclesfield, England, launched the silk industry which by 1910 boasted 300 mills and 25,000 workers.

Almost half of these operatives came as skilled craftspeople from textile centers in Europe. These workers brought with them radical political views shaped by their experience with the harshness of industrialization. Worker culture in Paterson finding expression in unions, political activities, ethnic churches, cooperatives, and associations had its counterpoint in the activities of the mill owners and their families. The silk elite intermarried with the families prominent in other Paterson industries and engaged in a social life of summer homes, parties, balls, and charities and demonstrated their wealth in the building of fine homes and the amassing of art collections. The museums chose to divide this history into three components—"The Worker" at the Labor Museum, "The Process" at the Paterson Museum, and "The Silk Elite" at the Society.

NEH-grant funds were used to retain an exhibit designer, historic consultants, a chief interpreter, fabricate three site exhibit components, produce a joint brochure and common street signage, and support children's theatre activities. In addition, plans were made to raise local monies to support three audio-visual components and an exhibition publication. These ambitious plans embodied

Credit: Courtesy of American Labor Museum, Haledon, NJ

A jointly sponsored street carnival fundraiser featured glimpses of Paterson's past, including this organ grinder and his monkey.

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a number of advantages and disadvantages to collaborative efforts for three small museums.

One of the first problems faced by the three museums was the decision to showcase the exhibit in the best possible way by completing needed capital improvements in time for this major exhibition. These improvements had been dragging for some time, and the approaching exhibition spurred the various boards of trustees to authorize needed work. Unfortunately for the staffs of small institutions, the supervision of such work demanded much time and energy. For instance, Lambert Castle received a new roof during this development period, and its period rooms were painted. The Botto House National Landmark renovated its second floor, converting it to gallery space to be used as an exhibit component. The opening of the exhibition saw a major physical change in all three sites as a response to the deadline, which cut into the staff's schedule for "Life and Times."

The sponsoring museums benefited collectively in the design aspect of the project. The designer was able to effectively utilize the uniqueness of each historic site while giving graphic unity to all three components. The cost of exhibit design was far less than if three institutions had separately contracted for design. This savings carried through for the cost of photograph reproduction and enlargement, silk screening, and printing.

One of the greatest advantages was the pooling of staff resources. Both the Castle and the Paterson Museum had two professionals on their staffs; the American Labor Museum had three. These museum people had a variety of special interests, training, and experience in exhibit construction, museum education, grant administration, public relations, conservation, and curatorial work. Supported by five academic historians whose previous work dealt with aspects of the silk industry, there was vastly increased team potential. A final advantage, more intangible but very real to the lone professionals in small institutions, was the mutual moral support. Weekly joint staff meetings were held, problems were discussed, and solutions found through a team approach which was greatly appreciated.

One area of potential difficulties was collections. The institutions involved loaned each other artifacts appropriate to specific components. Incoming donations of textiles, machinery, and photographs increased in direct proportion to publicity about the exhibition. Since collecting areas overlapped for all three institutions, it was decided all would continue to collect silk, and that other new donations would be divided by topic. This natural division worked well, and all the institutions received major additions to their collections as a result.

Interpretive programs had a natural advantage since the three components of the exhibition reflected the historical setting of the host museums. Visitors responded well to learning about the culture of workers in the context of an immigrant's home, the process of silk manufacture in a mill building, and the lifestyles of the wealthy in the former mansion of a silk tycoon. The exhibition's chief interpreter organized three site visits. Joint tickets for adults were priced at $2.50, a savings of fifty cents for admission to all three sites. Maps and directions were printed in a free brochure and the same map was repeated on the ticket itself. The tickets were not dated and a visitor could return at any time to see the second or third site. Hours for all the museums were uniform.

Group tours of the three sites were scheduled on Wednesdays and Fridays, days set aside by the three museums for this purpose. Tours for grades seven and above were organized around major concepts appropriate to age level: family and community; work and education; immigration and labor organization; management and industrial growth. Jointly, the staffs determined that a single visit to three sites would be too hectic for elementary-level students. Teachers of students below sixth grade were encouraged to arrange a visit to one of the three museums on Tuesdays and Thursdays. These were days which the institutions scheduled for those programs. All bookings for group tours were handled by the chief interpreter through the American Labor Museum.

A wide range of activities was developed in addition to the joint tour program. The Paterson Museum retained a silk weaver to operate a working loom as a Sunday program. Lambert Castle provided a lovely backdrop to an afternoon concert series. Family workshops and cuisine classes involved young people and adults in immigrant household life circa 1910 at the Botto House National Landmark. The American Labor Museum also sponsored a seminar series, labor and ethnic film series, and outreach talks. The Learning Theatre presented "Children of the Mills" for school and family audiences at the Paterson Museum.

Joint promotion and public relations was a very successful part of the collaborative exhibition. Uniting three area museums with a theme made perfect tourism sense. The cultural institutions together created a "destination" for families setting out for a day's excursion. Many people who had heard about Paterson's rebirth were encouraged to visit because of publicity about the exhibit and the sense that there was enough to see.

Media involvement was high, and constant newspaper and magazine coverage placed the museums in the public eye. Reporters were quick to catch the uniqueness of "Life and Times in Silk City." It was estimated that nearly a million people in the region had a tie to Paterson's silk industry. Although the industry had shrunk, it still captured the consciousness of the area.

Finally, the efforts to raise funds locally to support a weekend of opening events, the media presentations, and the publication, were greatly advanced by the collaborative nature of the exhibition. A Silk City Celebration Committee made up of prominent area residents found it easier to raise money on behalf of all three institutions than if they represented the cultural project of just one. Businesses, unions, corporations, and individuals were

impressed by the cooperative effort and enthusiastically helped with fundraising.

During the exhibition's fourteen-month run, the three sites enjoyed a nearly one-third increase in visitation, as well as continued high visibility for each institution. Several months after the opening Silk City Gala, the Passaic County Historical Society celebrated the Fiftieth Anniversary of the museum at Lambert Castle. An evening benefit raised more money than any previous effort; trustees felt the new and focused exhibit helped to market the Society.

Some major differences among the organizations surfaced during "Life and Times in Silk City" and helped determine the extent of future cooperative efforts. The American Labor Museum and the Passaic County Historical Society found that, as institutions, they had much in common. Both private, non-profit membership organizations headquartered in historic homes, these two institutions were staffed by history-oriented professionals with work patterns influenced by the rigorous demands of private organizations. These staffs had accountability to active, focused boards of trustees and to the demands of membership services. The Paterson Museum, with mineralogists on staff, were naturally less history-oriented. These museum professionals were city civil service employees, accustomed to a more regular pattern of work which often did not mesh well with mounting a major project outside the normal schedule. Often the demands of the city political structure and its governance by the Library Board of Trustees had to determine the Paterson Museum's agenda. Thus the benefits of collaborative programming were especially evident to the two private organizations. Plans have been made to continue these joint efforts.

Museums for a New Century: A Report of the Commission on Museums for a New Century includes a chapter on "The Collaborative Spirit." The commission suggests that, rather "than opting for joint programs through necessity, museums must take a lead in such efforts, for they offer many benefits in addition to economic efficiency." Certainly that was the experience of the Silk City museums and will serve as a basis for future efforts.

John A. Herbst is the Executive Director of the American Labor Museum and served as project director of "Life and Times in Silk City."